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THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION  
AND ITS WORK



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THE  
PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION  
AND ITS WORK

BY

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## PREFACE

Over one million women and men are now members of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. It is no secret that professional school people are not unanimous in their attitude toward this organization. Some, apparently, would have it eliminated, while others believe that, if properly directed, it may have an important and constructive influence in American education.

In the hope of throwing light upon the various problems involved, the writer has made a study of the activities, the objectives, and the organization of 797 local parent-teacher associations in nine states. This volume is intended to present compactly certain conclusions from this study, with their implications for educational practice, and to do it in such form as to make the material particularly useful to teachers and parents. The facts presented are for the school year 1924-25, except in New York and Ohio where they are for 1925-26.

The present study was made possible through research funds controlled by Cornell University. From the inception of the study the officers of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers have shown a sympathetic attitude. They have made available the resources of their organization. They have given

advice as to procedures that would be most likely to secure the data desired, have set forth problems they have met with, and have shown a whole-hearted desire to get an impartial appraisal of the association's activities and ideals. In no way whatever have they endeavored to influence the writer's judgment in the interpretation of the data.

I am indebted to the following persons for reading the manuscript and making constructive criticisms: Mrs. A. H. Reeve, president, and Mrs. A. C. Watkins, secretary, of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers; Mrs. Frederick M. Hosmer, former president, and Mrs. Albert W. Weaver, president, of the New York Congress of Parents and Teachers; Mrs. Henrietta Mayfield, field secretary of the United Parents' Associations of New York City; and Mrs. J. P. Matteson, corresponding secretary of the New York Congress. Particular mention should be made of Miss Olga C. Anderson, secretary and statistical clerk of the Division of Education at Cornell University. Not only did she personally make the analysis of programs and activities presented in Chapter II, thus insuring, as far as possible, uniformity in the interpretation and classification of the data, but she gave close supervision to all other tabulations and to the preparation of the diagrams.

JULIAN E. BUTTERWORTH.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY,  
January, 1928.

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# The Parent-Teacher Association and Its Work

## CHAPTER I

### THE GENERAL PROBLEM

In discussing the work of a local parent-teacher association, one of the officers was heard to remark that the members were considering disbanding. By raising funds and by stimulating the community to increase school taxes, they had succeeded in having the school recognized by the state as of standard rank, and there seemed nothing further to do.

The principal in another village, when asked what valuable things his association had done for the school that year, replied: "Nothing. All they have thought of and sponsored is dances, parties, and good times. Instead of being a help they have hindered school work." Another principal said: "Summing up the parent-teacher work for the last four years, I believe that, as far as influencing the school and public opinion goes, it has had a more harmful influence than helpful. The material contributions, however, have been commendable." And another: "While it has done but little good, yet it has done no

tions, but the officers estimate it at about twenty thousand. Each state except Nevada has a state branch of the National Congress.

**Other organizations of a similar nature.**—Nor do the foregoing data tell the whole story. There are other organizations of a similar sort. The stated purpose of the South Carolina School Improvement Association is “to unite all the people of this community for the improvement of our public school: (1) by placing in the school facilities for health, comfort, and education together with objects of beauty; (2) by planting trees, shrubs, and flowers on the school grounds; (3) by encouraging the establishment of a library in the school; (4) by making the school a center for the community by furnishing instructive amusements.” In 1926 there were eight hundred associations in South Carolina with a reported membership of twenty thousand. Similar associations are found in other southern states, especially in Alabama and in Arkansas.

The School Improvement League of Maine sets forth its objects as: “(1) to make the local school the center of local community interest; (2) to improve physical conditions; (3) to help provide school libraries, pictures, and supplementary equipment.” One interesting feature of this organization is that pupils are eligible for membership. In 1926 there were over seven hundred leagues, but the state office has kept no record of membership.

In Virginia the Coöperative Education Association

(organized in 1902) has rather broad objectives, namely, "to advance the educational, recreational, social, spiritual, moral, physical, civic, and economic interests of the community." In 1926 this organization estimated that there were about twelve hundred Community Leagues with between six hundred and seven hundred Junior Leagues for boys and girls. The estimated membership for both divisions is about 65,000. This may be compared with a membership of 4532 reported from that state in 1926 to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. There is very little overlapping in the membership of the two organizations.

Mr. J. H. Montgomery, director of the Coöperative Education Association of Virginia, outlines the work of his organization as follows:

The Coöperative Education Association is, in many respects, a state-wide clearing house. It is a union of the educational, health, agricultural, and welfare forces of the state. This association is under the supervision of the governor of the state, the heads of the state departments of education, health, highways, welfare, and agriculture, the state directors of farm demonstration work and home demonstration work, the state librarian, and a group of citizens themselves. In other words, it unites the official and unofficial leaders of the state in a great coöperative effort. Yet it is not an official state organization, nor is it in any way connected with any political unit or units. Its support is derived from a small state appropriation and from private contributions. The state appropriation amounts to about one-sixth of our budget.

Continuing, he says:

In answer to your question, how the organization and work of the Coöperative Education Association of Virginia differ

from that of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, I should say the difference is about as follows:

First, instead of the Coöperative Education Association being just another organization, doing its work separately, it is rather a coördinating agency. This association is made up of the official and unofficial leaders of the state, working in coöperation.

Second, the program of the Coöperative Education Association is more comprehensive. In addition to doing all the work usually done by a Parent-Teacher Association, a Community League takes up all the various problems connected with the improvement of the community as a whole.

Third, in addition to the local organization for adults, this association has an organization — the Junior Community League — for the school pupils. And it provides for a county organization — a County Council — through which the officials and the leaders of all county organizations can coöperate in promoting every interest of the county.

Child-study clubs, mothers' study clubs, and pre-school study circles are illustrations of other organizations performing functions somewhat similar to those of the parent-teacher association. Sometimes these are connected with a church, the parent-teacher association itself, or some other social agency. Sometimes they are entirely independent. There are a few genuine parent-teacher associations not affiliated with the state or national organization. This study deals only with associations that are affiliated.

**Historical statement.** — The parent-teacher association is an outgrowth of our increasing humanitarianism. During the latter part of the nineteenth century this humanitarianism manifested itself in improved facilities for education through public support, and in school attendance laws, health im-

provement, prison reform, and the like. More specifically, the parent-teacher movement had its origin in 1897 when a group met in Washington and organized the National Congress of Mothers. Its original statement of purposes included: the education of parents for child development; the coöperation of home and school; the promotion of the kindergarten movement; the securing of legislation for neglected and dependent children; and the education of young people for parenthood. In 1908 the name of the organization was changed to the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. In 1924 it was again changed, to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

**The major problems.** — The chief problems in this study are three: (1) to discover what activities parent-teacher associations actually engage in; (2) to consider what place, if any, such an organization should have in our educational program; (3) to undertake an evaluation of present activities to see in what ways, if any, redirection of energy should take place. Several subordinate problems relating to the character of the membership, the extent and nature of teacher participation, methods whereby a local association may determine its program, criteria by which an association may measure its effectiveness, and other related matters will be set forth at various points.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS DO

**Analysis of activities.** — Whether parent, teacher, superintendent, or member of the board of education, we are all interested in providing those conditions that will enable children and young people to develop in the best way. Without regard to whether we favor or do not favor the parent-teacher association as one means of providing desirable influences, let us try to see in as unprejudiced a manner as is humanly possible just what it is that this organization does.

Diagram 1 shows the activities engaged in by the nearly eight hundred local associations studied in nine states — California, Iowa, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. The activities included here are those undertaken during the year outside the regular programs. The list includes such activities as purchasing a phonograph for the school or uniforms for the school band; helping to persuade the community to vote a bond issue; holding an art exhibit; studying the influence of moving pictures in the community; providing hot lunches for school children; giving parties or dinners for the football team or other school organization; aiding the promotion of a Boy



Scout troop in the community; and raising funds to carry on the work of the association. Owing to the large number of different activities, this diagram does not present all the specific activities performed.

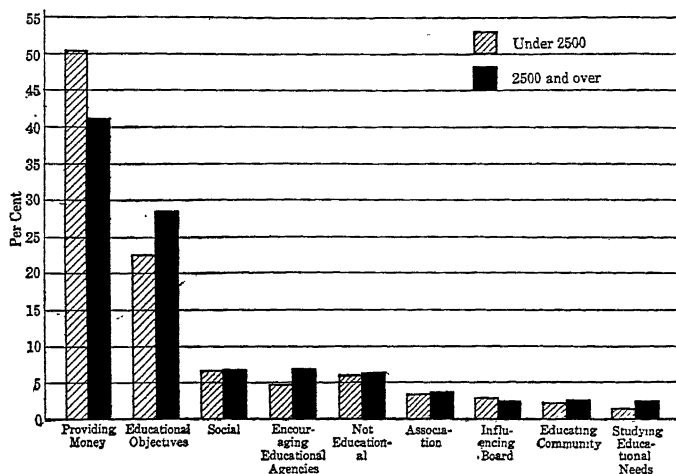


DIAGRAM 1.

How the nine main groups of activities performed by associations in communities of less than 2500 compare with those in places of 2500 or more. For detailed data see Table IX. The figures at the left show the percentage of all activities of these associations devoted to each group.

It does, however, classify them into a few large groups so that one may get a more comprehensive picture of what these organizations do than might otherwise be possible.

Notice on Diagram 1 that there are nine groups of activities: "providing money," "educational ob-

jectives," "social," "encouraging educational agencies," "not educational," "association," "influencing the board," "educating the community," and "studying educational needs."

*The groups of activities explained and compared.* — The first group includes activities which provide money for specific needs within and without the school. Associations give funds for improving the building and grounds. They also purchase various types of equipment: books and magazines for the school library; apparatus for the playground; sand-tables, pianos, phonographs, moving-picture machines, radios, laboratory equipment, and scales; decorations, including curtains and pictures; furniture; supplies; and such miscellaneous items as stage curtains, oil stoves, and home-making equipment. Funds are in a few cases given for teachers' salaries, particularly for special teachers, such as debating coaches, playground supervisors, and school nurses. Money is raised for such extracurricular activities as glee clubs; prizes to stimulate scholarship; gifts to teachers, especially when ill; paying the principal's rent; telephone, cleaning, insurance, light, and janitor service. Indeed, there seems to be little relating to the school for which money is not provided by some associations. In addition, funds are donated for purposes outside the school — for Red Cross work, hospitals, a community Christmas tree, such charity as providing children with eye-glasses, pianos in churches, and community recreation.

Notice now that Diagram 1 makes a comparison between the frequency with which these groups of activities are performed in two types of communities — those of less than 2500 population and those of 2500 and over. In the smaller communities, providing money accounts for a little over 50 per cent of all activities, while in the larger communities it is a little over 40 per cent. The sums of all the percentages represented by the black bars and the light bars are each 100 per cent. As may be seen from the diagram, providing funds includes a very large part of all activities performed by associations, whether or not in communities of less than 2500. At this point we are not attempting to say whether such emphasis is wise or not. The discussion of this matter is reserved for Chapter IV.

The data from which this diagram was constructed may be found in Table IX (see insert opposite p. 128). This table gives some of the larger items included in each of the nine groups of activities, and shows how frequently they were performed in each of the nine states and in schools of different size. It is hoped that you will pause long enough to make such comparisons as may interest you among the different states and among the different schools. Notice that all the associations in communities of 2500 population and over are in New York State.

A particularly important type of activity is found in the second group shown in the diagram (in Table IX, this is group V), which is concerned with the

direct promotion of the educational objectives as set forth by the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (see page 31 for details). This group includes, for example, activities performed by associations in helping to provide for the wise use of leisure on the part of children and young people; namely, securing the right sort of moving pictures, providing good reading facilities for school children, and establishing or supervising a playground. This group of activities also includes those relating to the promotion of health, vocational training, citizenship, character development, and worthy home membership. Further details may be found in Table IX, (opp. p. 128). The group as a whole accounts for 22.4 per cent of all activities in the smaller communities and for 28.3 per cent in the larger ones.

The third group in Diagram 1 includes social affairs given for graduating classes, athletic teams, and other groups of pupils. These activities include 6.7 per cent and 6.9 per cent of all. Receptions for teachers are not included here, being classified under programs in Diagram 7.

"Encouraging educational agencies" (VII in Table IX) includes efforts made by the parent-teacher association to encourage the organization among pupils of musical organizations, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops; and to aid in the establishment or direction of exhibits and lyceums. Four and eight-tenths per cent of all activities in the case of the

smaller communities and 6.9 per cent in the case of the larger ones are included here.

In the fifth group (VIII in Table IX), "not educational," are found activities that are not primarily educational — charity efforts and community dinners, for example.

The sixth group (IX in Table IX) includes such efforts in forwarding the parent-teacher association itself as increasing attendance and membership, working out proper relationships with other organizations in the community, and raising funds to carry on its work. In this group are found 3.4 and 3.5 per cent, respectively, of all activities.

The seventh group, "influencing the board" (IV in Table IX), includes activities that indicate an attempt to influence the school board or the teaching staff on school questions. Usually this is done through an appointed committee which confers with the school officers, or through resolutions. It should be said that the wisdom of group action of this sort is much open to question (see p. 62), and if done at all should be very carefully guarded. These activities account for 2.9 and 2.2 per cent, respectively, of all the activities.

The eighth group, "educating the community" (III in Table IX), relates to educating the community on school needs, especially in regard to proposed bonds for school buildings. This one specific item covers most of the activities in this group, which includes 2.1 per cent and 2.6 per cent of all activities.

The last group, "studying the educational needs" (II in Table IX), though important, has the smallest percentage of activities given to it — 1.3 per cent and 2.2 per cent. In this group are found such activities of the association as are related to discovering the educational needs of the community in such matters as consolidation, use of leisure, character development, and school buildings. A detailed survey is sometimes made, though cases are included where less exact methods of "studying" the needs have been employed.

*Other comparisons.* — We are now prepared to make more detailed comparisons of these activities. In Diagram 1, associations in communities of less than 2500 were compared with those of 2500 and over. Providing money together with promoting educational objectives accounts for 72.7 per cent of all activities in the smaller places and for 69.4 per cent in the larger ones. In Diagram 2, page 15, these two groups are subdivided into their more important constituent activities. In the smaller communities a larger proportion (9.2 per cent) of activities deals with providing money than in the larger communities, while these larger communities direct a larger proportion (5.9 per cent) to the promotion of educational objectives. Associations in the smaller places give a larger percentage of their activities to providing money for buildings, apparatus, and equipment, but only about half as large a percentage to matters outside the school. One probable reason is that in

smaller communities there is more need for supplementing the regular school funds, either because a reasonable tax rate does not bring in enough or because the citizens are more reluctant to raise funds for school purposes. In the promotion of educational objectives, health and leisure account for most of

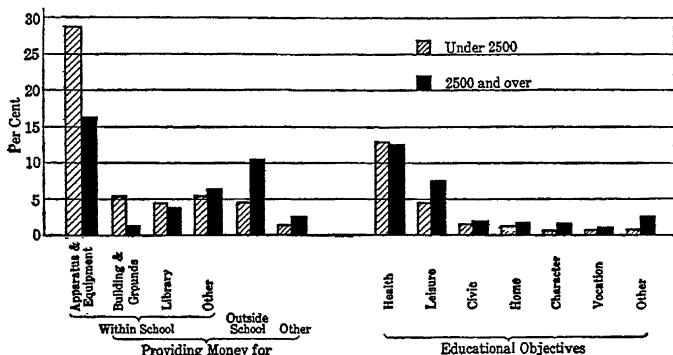


DIAGRAM 2.

A comparison, according to size of community, of the more frequently occurring activities making up the main groups dealing with "Providing money" and "Directly concerned with the promotion of educational objectives." For detailed data see Table IX, items I and V. The figures at the left show the percentage of all activities of the associations devoted to each activity.

the activities in both large and small communities. On the whole, the differences between the two types of communities are surprisingly small.

It is interesting to note the variations among the states (see Table IX, opp. p. 128) as to the relative frequency of the different types of activities. The Virginia associations give 74.4 per cent of their ac-

tivities to providing money; North Carolina, 64.4 per cent; while Iowa, only 35.9 per cent; and New York, 44.6 per cent. North Carolina gives only 10.3 per cent of its activities to the promotion of educational objectives; and Virginia, only 13.5 per cent; while New York gives 29.5 per cent to the same purpose; Ohio, 27.7 per cent; and California, 27.5

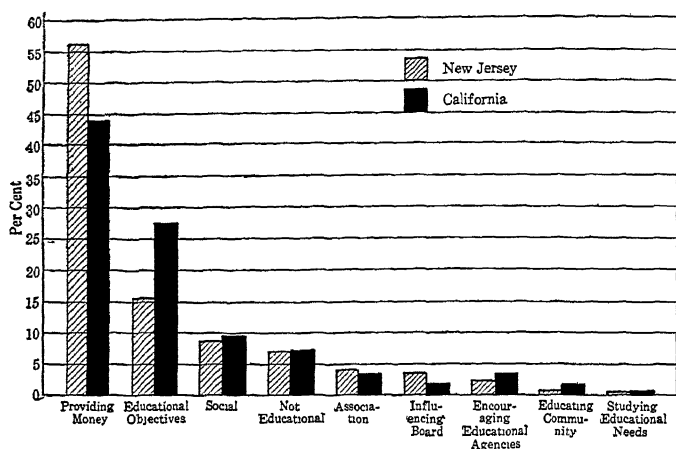


DIAGRAM 3.

New Jersey and California compared as to the percentage distribution of all activities among the nine main groups. For detailed data see Table IX.

per cent. In Diagram 3 the data from New Jersey and California are presented for comparative purposes. These two states are selected partly because they illustrate some of these differences (though not as strikingly as other states) and partly because the



associations are fairly well distributed among schools of different sizes.

**Analysis of programs.** — A second source of information as to what associations do is found in the programs presented at their regular meetings. These are of significance in showing what the members are hearing and saying and, presumably, what they are discussing and thinking about. Indirectly, at least, the programs reveal the conceptions that associations have of their functions.

In Table X (opposite p. 130, Appendix A) are given the results of analyzing the "topics" in 2879 programs of associations in the nine states. These "topics" are usually talks, lectures, and discussions of the subjects considered. They comprise the more intellectual aspects of the programs and are to be contrasted with "entertainment" and "reception" features which are considered in the last part of this chapter. Diagram 4 presents graphically the important facts from this table.

The first group, "problems primarily of the child" (this is V in Table X), shows the extent to which the programs deal with certain large objectives of education from the child's point of view. In contrast, the next group, "problems primarily of adults and the community" (VI in Table X), shows to what extent associations view themselves as general community organizations or as special organizations for giving general information. While there may be a correlation between a discussion of gardening and the

educational problems of the child, it obviously is not so closely correlated as a discussion on the type of breakfast desirable for school children. Even less closely connected with the generally assumed functions of a parent-teacher association is a presentation of Walt Whitman's biography or a discussion of Burns's poetry. These illustrations from actual programs suggest what happens when an association presents topics dealing largely with adult and community problems. From Diagram 4 you will notice that the larger places have a larger percentage (6.1) of topics devoted to the child's problems, while in

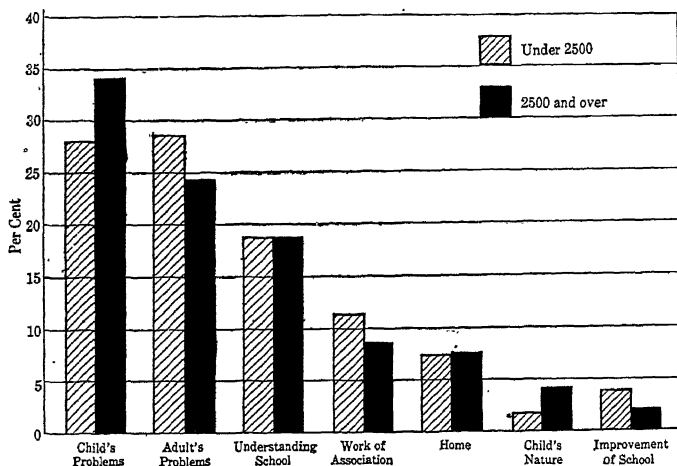


DIAGRAM 4.

How the seven main groups of "topics" on the programs of associations in communities of less than 2500 compare with those in places of 2500 or more. For detailed data see Table X. The figures at the left show the percentage of all "topics" devoted to each group.

the smaller ones, a larger percentage (4.1) relate to the adult's problems. In smaller communities the associations have a larger percentage of topics dealing with the work of the association and with the improvement of the school, but only about half as large a percentage relating to the child's nature. The two groups have the same percentage of topics on understanding the work of the school.

In Diagram 5 the more important constituent types of topics for three of the groups (V, VI, and I

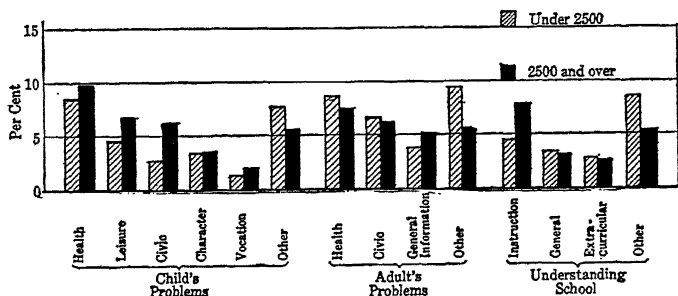


DIAGRAM 5.

A comparison, according to size of community, of the more frequently found "topics" making up the main groups dealing with "Problems primarily of the child," "Problems primarily of adults and community," and "Understanding the work and ideals of the school." For detailed data see Table X, items V, VI, and I.

in Table X) are set forth in such a way that comparisons may be made between associations in the larger and in the smaller communities. Health and civic participation receive a considerable proportion of attention in both "child's problems" and "adult's problems"; leisure in "child's problems"; while

vocations, little in either. In topics dealing with understanding the work of the school, instruction and demonstration teaching has an important place. This is worthy of particular mention because it is probably a much more effective way of giving parents an idea of modern teaching methods than is a mere description of those methods.

*Comparisons among the states.* — There are marked variations among the states as to the content of programs (Table X). In New Jersey only 9.5 per cent of the topics relate to understanding the work of the school; in New York, 14.5 per cent; while in Ohio it is 23.8 per cent; and in Virginia, 27.7 per cent. North Carolina devotes 16.4 per cent of its topics to the work of the association, while Iowa and New York give only 8.5 per cent. Virginia gives 19.5 per cent to the child's problems, while New York gives 31.9 per cent and Texas, 32.3 per cent. The variations in the problems primarily of adults and community are also quite marked — 22.6 per cent in Texas and 36.9 per cent in New Jersey. These include a large share of all topics presented.

Diagram 6, page 21, presents the data on the seven groups for New Jersey and California.

*Entertainment and receptions.* — As already suggested, Diagram 4 does not present the whole picture as to the programs of parent-teacher associations. Account needs to be taken of the "entertainment" and "reception" features of the programs.

"Entertainment" includes such items as music,

plays, and recitations, although these have other than entertainment aspects. Of course, music also serves to satisfy and train the æsthetic sense, and plays and recitations may give information or suggest a moral. In the judgment of the writer, however,

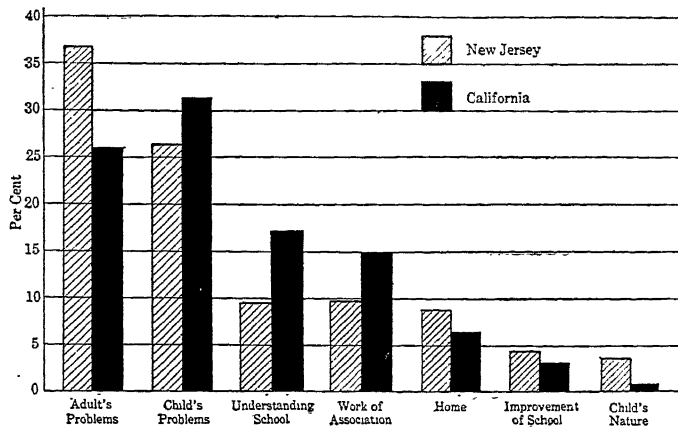


DIAGRAM 6.

New Jersey and California compared as to the percentage distribution of all "topics" among the seven main groups. For detailed data see Table X.

the entertainment aspect dominates in most of these. In the total number of programs analyzed there were 4097 "entertainment" features and only 3646 "topics," as presented in Table X.

"Receptions" may include entire evenings or afternoons given to social enjoyment or they may follow programs and involve merely an informal half hour during which refreshments frequently are served. The former type, however, predominates,

there being 233 meetings reported as devoted entirely to receptions and sixty-seven devoted in part to this purpose. An effort was made to reduce the "all-reception" meetings to such a basis that they could be compared with the "topics" and "entertainment."<sup>1</sup>

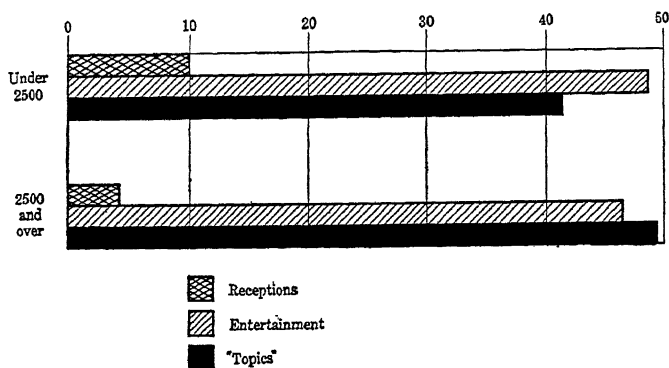


DIAGRAM 7.

A comparison, according to size of community, of the frequency of receptions, "entertainment," and "topics." See accompanying explanation.

The results are presented graphically in Diagram 7. It is well to reserve judgment as to the wisdom of

<sup>1</sup>This was done by assigning a value to each "all-reception" meeting equal to the average number of "topics" and "entertainment" features in each program. Thus: 2058 programs in communities of fewer than 2500 presented a total of 6233 "topics" and "entertainment" features, or an average of about 3.0 each meeting. In places of 2500 and over, 588 programs contained 1510 such items, or an average of 2.6 each program. The 212 "all-reception" meetings in places of fewer than 2500 were then multiplied by 3.0; and the 21 such meetings in places of 2500 and over, by 2.6. Part-time receptions were counted as equivalent to one "topic" or "entertainment" feature.

giving so much time to entertainment until Chapters III and IV have been reached. In interpreting this diagram, it is, of course, necessary to keep in mind that the data cannot claim to be more than approximately correct.

The distribution among schools of all sizes is strikingly similar. In places under 2500, "topics" account for 41.4 per cent of the items on the programs; "entertainment," for 48.6 per cent; and "receptions," for 10.0 per cent. In places of 2500 and over, the percentages are 49.4, 46.6, and 4.0 for the same items. Considerable variation is seen among the states. Texas gives 58.8 per cent to "topics," and Virginia, 25.4 per cent; Ohio gives 63.3 per cent to "entertainment," and Texas, 26.6 per cent; New Jersey gives 18.6 per cent to receptions, and Ohio, 2.6 per cent.

*Participation of school children.* — Of the entire number of "topics" and "entertainments," 1980, or 25.6 per cent, were provided by school children. This percentage is surprisingly large. These were distributed as follows:

ACTIVITY	UNDER 2500	2500 AND OVER
Music . . . . .	49.5	48.0
Plays . . . . .	13.5	10.9
Readings . . . . .	16.5	21.7
Debate . . . . .	.9	0
Drill . . . . .	2.9	3.3
"Entertainment" . . . .	5.9	8.3
Miscellaneous . . . . .	7.9	7.6
Unspecified . . . . .	2.9	.2

How far are associations doing what they ought? — In the field of education we do not have sufficient control of the various factors involved to enable us to measure each factor and decide that certain ones are needed in definite proportions to meet specified conditions. In this respect our field is not, and perhaps never can be, as exact as chemistry, for instance. We do not have standards that enable us to say that a parent-teacher association should give a definite percentage of its energy to promoting its own work, a definite percentage to entertainment, a definite percentage to developing the responsibilities of the home. It is doubtful whether we shall ever have standards on this problem that can be applied in any such mechanical way. To do so would imply that in each school where a parent-teacher association exists, conditions are the same or similar. We know that this is not the case. We know that in some communities home responsibility is fairly well assumed, while in others it is largely lacking. In still others, the members of the association see so clearly the educational work to be done that they need little in the way of entertainment to hold them to their opportunities. There are too many factors at work in our modern society to expect any such uniformity of conditions.

For the same reasons we cannot say that associations should be governed by present practice as revealed, for example, in the data presented on the preceding pages. The officers of each local associa-



tion should make a study of its activities and programs and should compare these results with those presented in these tables. They should recognize, however, that such standards are for guidance only. Assuming the approximate accuracy of these data, it is entirely unlikely that all associations are meeting their problems wisely. Some are engaging in doubtful activities; some are neglecting entirely certain significant ones; while most do not distribute their energies proportionally among the activities most needed. Indeed, it is entirely possible that many associations do not yet sense some of their important opportunities.

When man faces a problem on which he lacks scientific information, he "guesses" as best he can how the problem may be met. So in education, we set up objectives or goals toward which we believe we should work and use those methods and materials that we think will aid us best in reaching the objectives. Alert workers always try to check, through practice and experiment, the effectiveness and soundness of those methods, materials, and objectives. Hence, we raise the question as to why we teach arithmetic; we study the problems of life to see what types of arithmetical knowledge we should possess; we select particular materials from arithmetic and eliminate the nonessentials or lesser essentials for particular groups of persons; we painstakingly test various methods of teaching and learning to see which are most effective and economical; and

we give achievement tests to see whether individuals and classes are making reasonable progress.

Let us examine very briefly our present conceptions of education <sup>1</sup> to see what place, if any, such an organization as the parent-teacher association may have. We may then discover general standards that will aid us in evaluating these associations and what they do.

<sup>1</sup> It would be well to read one or more of our standard works on the philosophy of education, such as Peters: *Foundations of Educational Sociology* (Macmillan); Kilpatrick: *Foundations of Method* (Macmillan); Dewey: *Democracy and Education* (Macmillan); Dewey: *Human Nature and Conduct* (Holt).

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT IS EDUCATION?

**Educational purposes or objectives.** — In its essentials education may be thought of as the process of developing the individual from what he is to what we think he ought to be.

Ordinarily, the child entering school is not able to read or write. Under present-day conditions of living in this country it is essential that he learn to interpret with reasonable facility the written thought of others, and express his own thoughts in reasonably legible form and with a fair degree of speed. In developing from the one stage to the other the pupil is being educated.

The very small child is largely lacking in emotional self-control. He is likely to lose his temper over what, to the average adult, would be a mere trifle and to express his thoughts without regard to their effect upon others. Gradually he learns, through instruction or other experience, that it is well to bring these primitive forms of expression under control. As he does this he acquires self-control or poise. In this development he is being educated to meet situations that are quite as likely to affect his future welfare as was the case in his learning to read and write.

*Limitations in certain objectives.* — As we place emphasis upon one or another of the many abilities in which development is possible or desirable, we get one or another objective of education. We are familiar with the conception of education for *knowledge*. You may remember writing as a child — innumerable times, it seemed then — in the penmanship “copy-book” of the day: “Knowledge is power.” This statement is true in the sense that a ready control of the facts and principles involved is necessary in meeting almost any life situation, whether it be the buying of a suit of clothes or arguing a case before the Supreme Court of the United States. But knowledge alone is not sufficient. It does not necessarily develop a well-disciplined mind, trained to evaluate known facts and principles and to discover new ones. Neither does knowledge, as usually defined, insure one’s being able to take his place as a self-supporting member of society, to recognize his obligations to his fellows, and to meet those obligations according to our present ideals of citizenship.

Hence, as these and other factors needed to meet life situations are recognized and emphasized, other educational objectives arise: such as discipline, culture, morality, utility, citizenship, social efficiency.

Each of these objectives has been of influence because each expresses an important purpose of a complete education. Each, however, has limitations when used alone, . . . an education merely for utility or for culture has obvious limitations. Of all

the terms suggested social efficiency is the broadest, but even that does not suggest with sufficient definiteness that the efficiency must be in a progressive rather than in a static social organization, nor that there are other types of efficiency than the social. Much depends, of course, upon the definition given each of the terms proposed, but each term, used in its primary sense, fails to give an all-inclusive objective. Furthermore, all these objectives have tended to become hedged about by definite meanings that limit their scope.<sup>1</sup>

*Growth as an ultimate objective.*—To me John Dewey suggests the most meaningful conception of education in that he applies the development idea to all our needs in getting from where we are to where we think we ought to be. His conception is that education is *growth*, implying, of course, that growth should be in the directions we believe particularly significant for the conditions under which we live.

Growth is considered not only as a means to an end but as the end itself. It is not sufficient to produce, through growth, a man of knowledge or of culture or of character or one able to make a living or to become an effective citizen. We should seek to make a *growing* individual and therefore one who, because he grows, acquires more knowledge and more culture, makes a better living, and becomes a more effective citizen. To accept knowledge or citizenship or culture, as commonly defined, as the end of education is to imply that when a specified standard in any one of them is attained there is no further need for education. Hence the average citizen is in danger of thinking that a person with a certain amount of knowledge, or character, or ability as a citizen or as a man of practical affairs, is the end, the ultimate development in man. Reflection convinces us that this should not be true—that no matter how able a man may be as a citizen, for instance, there is a possibility (limited

<sup>1</sup> Butterworth, Julian E. *Principles of Rural School Administration*, pp. 30, 31. The Macmillan Company, 1926.

of course by his native capacities) of his becoming a better citizen if he continues to utilize his powers in adapting himself to his environment. The advantage, therefore, of using growth, broadly interpreted, as the large objective is that we always have a stimulus to the attainment of something higher. Yet, should growth come to mean improvement only in definite directions and to a specified degree, it would have the same limitations that other objectives now have.

If our civilization were static, the ideal of growth would not be so important. We could then acquire the facts and principles and develop the habits and skills that would enable us to adjust ourselves to our environment. With this equipment we could be as good a doctor or farmer or citizen as anyone else without being alert to supplement knowledge or revise principles or modify habits and skills. But nothing is more true than that our present civilization is not static. It is generally true, and most people appear to accept the idea, that no matter how well our activities function in meeting the problems of life there is a chance for improvement either because we see where better adjustment may be made or because changes in the environment make other adjustment desirable.

Clearly such a conception does not imply radical procedures; rather it involves a careful, orderly analysis of the situation, a search for means to meet the needs of the situation, and a testing of those means. Old materials, ideas, and practices are to be utilized — built upon — rather than ignored.<sup>1</sup>

*Specific objectives.* — In what directions should growth take place?

We shall find the answer to this question of the directions in which we should grow by analyzing the demands of and opportunities in life itself. Each of us, as he goes through life, has certain situations to face as a citizen, as a parent, as a friend, as a seeker of happiness, as a worker in his particular field of labor. Such situations not only lay obligations upon us but create opportunities for getting greater satisfaction out of life.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 32.

An analysis of life into its constituent obligations and opportunities may be expected, therefore, to reveal the objectives of education.

It may be conducive to clearness if we think of levels among objectives. At one level we may say that we, living in these days and under these social conditions, should grow in ability to meet the four major obligations of: (1) home; (2) vocation; (3) civic life; (4) other social responsibilities as represented by school, church, fraternal organization, and the like. These duties should then be further analyzed into their constituent activities, both those actually performed and those to be desired.

Or, we may make a somewhat more specific analysis of our life duties and so choose objectives similar to those presented by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education: (1) health; (2) command of the fundamental processes, such as reading and writing; (3) worthy home membership; (4) civic participation; (5) worthy use of leisure; (6) ethical character; and (7) vocation.<sup>1</sup> Each of these should then be analyzed into its specific objectives. In health education we should seek such objectives as knowledge of the body and how it works, principles of sanitation and hygiene, ideals of a body in perfect condition, and habits that safeguard health. Thus we should be led to consider such problems as diet, air, exercise, recreation, and sewage disposal; and to develop such habits as brushing the teeth, chewing food thoroughly, and taking frequent baths. These latter constitute specific objectives which, when attained, contribute to the achievement of health, one of the large obligations of man.<sup>2</sup>

**Education and schooling.** — When we think of education as growth we see at once that it is not confined to the school. Every experience has educative possibilities, whether it be a visit to the neigh-

<sup>1</sup> "Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education," *Bulletin No. 35*, United States Bureau of Education, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Butterworth, Julian E. *Principles of Rural School Administration*, pp. 38, 39. The Macmillan Company, 1926.

boring city, a dinner party, a hunting trip, or reading the newspaper. As a matter of fact, experiences may provide opportunities for growth in what we consider wrong as well as in right directions. Hence it becomes important to know what a fifteen-year-old boy reads in the newspaper, in order to know what ideals are set up and how far they influence his daily conduct. Looked at in this way, the newspaper becomes not only a means of disseminating information but an agency of no mean proportions in stimulating and directing the growth of both children and adults.

**Types of environmental influences.** — A person's environment is made up of many specific environments. We have just referred to one — the newspaper environment.

One of the most powerful environments is the *home*. It nurtures the child during his most impressionable period so that the ideals set up and the habits formed are likely to have considerable influence throughout life. It touches practically every important problem of everyday living: health habits, manners, self-control, responsibility, moral standards, taste in dress, financial judgment, and social ideals. Since every situation makes its impression upon those involved — and especially upon the growing child — an untrained parent may be an educational menace.

The *church* environment is more limited, at least as far as frequency of influence is concerned. These influences vary according to the particular church



and the conceptions of its leaders. Fundamentally it is concerned with the spiritual values of life. As it emphasizes these values in terms of better everyday living with the people with whom we come in contact, its practical influence is likely to be increased. Through the Sunday school and the young people's societies, instruction is given in Biblical history and in moral and other social ideals, and opportunity is offered for the development of members through participation in the various instructional, social, and leadership activities of the organizations.

The *theater*, through its visualization of the many conditions and problems of life, has a unique opportunity to set up standards of entertainment, give instruction, and suggest ideals. The *playground* provides opportunity for enjoyment, for the establishment of social contacts, and particularly for the development of physical habits and ideals. The *Boy Scout* aim is, according to a statement in the Act of Incorporation, "to promote, through organization and coöperation with other agencies, the abilities of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in scout craft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues." According to scout law, "a scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." With such a range of ideals taught through actual life situations, this organization is coming to be influential in the education of adolescent boys.

Equally significant is the work of the *Girls Scouts* and similar groups.

Among other agencies and forces that have more or less educational influence are the *radio*, the *automobile*, the numerous *fraternal organizations*, the *farm bureau*, the *home bureau*, the *grange*, the *commercial club*, *books*, and *periodicals*.

**Education a continuous process.** — At one or more stages in his development an individual touches most of these and many other special environments. He plays, goes to the show, reads the magazines, goes to church, and participates in the activities of the home. Each of these experiences influences him to greater or less degree, to his well-being or to the contrary. This happens whether we know it or not or admit it or not. We may overlook or deny the effect of these experiences, but they are making their impression nevertheless and are fashioning the individual into what he finally becomes. It is important, therefore, that we recognize the continuity of the educational process in order that we may exert effort intelligently for the wise control of all experiences whether in or out of school.

**Our enlarging conception of the school.** — The school has at times become a very formal institution. Instead of being a place where all educational needs of children and young people may be met, it has been too often devoted largely to teaching certain skills — as reading and spelling — and certain types of information — as history and geography.

We are now coming to see the school as an agency with residual functions. By this we mean that the school should have as its ideal the provision of those experiences, not afforded in the special environments, which children of school age need to grow as we believe they should. This, of course, makes the function of the school far broader than the teaching of traditional subjects.

There is no type of training that one needs for success in any aspect of life that is not the school's proper concern. It is not its privilege to draw itself up within the limits of a traditional curriculum and say, "these other things do not belong to me." If they pertain to fitness for effective living, whether related to health, wealth, sociability, knowledge, beauty, or rightness, and if they can be at all improved through training, they do belong to the school.<sup>1</sup>

As one reservation to the foregoing statement of general function, Peters adds:

It [the school] is only the co-ordinating and supplementing factor among all the educational agencies. Its function is a distinctly residual one. It must itself do whatever needs to be done but which no other agency is adequately doing. It begins where the other agencies leave off. That involves, on the one hand, that it should not blindly duplicate what other agencies are doing, for there is too much to be accomplished to allow of any waste on purposeless duplication; and, on the other hand, it involves that the school should not pass by any sort of training needed for effective future life which no other agency is adequately giving, no matter how far removed its giving would be from the conventional practice of our schools.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Peters, Charles C. *Foundations of Educational Sociology*, p. 158. The Macmillan Company, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.

This conception of the school as an agency with residual functions is a recognition of continuity in the educational process. It sees the responsibilities of the school as growing out of the needs in the whole life of the pupil, not of a particular segment only.

*Difficulties in realizing this function completely.* — Yet any thoughtful person will realize that, while this theory of the residual functions of the school suggests a goal that is stimulating, it is one that will not often be completely attained. One reason is that the school seldom has all the resources needed to do this. The typical small school cannot provide the varied curricula or courses to meet equally well the needs of the boy who wants to farm, of the girl who wishes to become a clerk, and the boy who expects to go to college.

Another reason is that the school is often not alert to modifying its program for changing needs. A subject or an aspect of a subject once in the curriculum tends to remain even after the conditions that warranted its introduction have changed. The school as an institution still thinks of education too much in terms of teaching subjects, rather than developing the abilities needed to meet the problems of life.

Instead of beginning with Latin or ancient history, for example, and attempting to show what it is possible for those subjects to contribute, the scientific worker on curriculum problems will, through an analysis of the language and civic activi-

ties and needs of modern society, determine the educational objectives with respect to language and social science. He will then select and arrange tentatively the subject-matter materials best suited to meet those objectives effectively. With these tentatively chosen materials he will proceed in an experimental way to determine the soundness of his selection and to discover the most effective methods of utilizing them, rejecting or adopting on the basis of results.<sup>1</sup>

According to Wilson's investigation, nineteen arithmetical processes are no longer used and so should not be taught to all elementary school pupils. Among these are troy weight, longitude and time, compound interest, and cube root.<sup>2</sup>

If arithmetic is to serve life, life must be examined. A social point of view and method are required. The common uses of arithmetic in the daily activities and occupations of men and women in general will offer the best constructive criticism of prevailing courses of study. . . . It [the social survey] will show what ought finally to be known if one is to be an effective adult among the common run of men and women.<sup>3</sup>

We are now making considerable progress in discovering life needs and in modifying the school curriculum to meet them.

A third reason for the school's failure to undertake all that the theory of residual functions implies is, doubtless, that it does not know just how to meet

<sup>1</sup> Ferriss, Emery N. *Secondary Education in Country and Village*, p. 54. D. Appleton and Company, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, Guy M. *What Arithmetic Shall We Teach?* pp. 11-12. Riverside Educational Monographs. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii. Quoted from the Editor's Introduction by Henry Suzzallo.

the particular needs. To help people, especially boys, discover the life work in which they can find greatest satisfaction is difficult. It involves a knowledge of the boy's capacities and interests, of the requirements of a particular line of work both now and years hence, of the financial returns that are possible, of the training required for the work, of the possibility that the boy can secure that training, and of other aspects. While some schools are doing something, especially in the way of stimulating a study of life opportunities, the heart of the problem has still not been reached.

These practical difficulties impress us with the importance of making a second reservation to the conception of residual functions; namely, that the school should not assume without question every responsibility that may be placed upon it. Even under conditions much more nearly ideal than the present, the school would soon be too overwhelmed to perform its fundamental functions if other agencies in the community did not carry part of the burden.

**Other problems in unifying experiences.** — We have, then, a need for controlling the educational aspects of home, church, and other special environments so that the effect upon the growing child will be as nearly as possible what we would like to have it. Hence, no matter how completely the school performs its duties according to the theory of residual functions, there remains something of a problem of bringing school and out-of-school experiences

together. Miss Perry has phrased the idea well in these words:

Progress along the line of the attainment of educational objectives cannot be expected if one of the agencies contributing to their attainment persistently disregards the laws of learning. There must be an agreement on the part of the controllers of the two environments as to *what* is to be attained and *how* it is to be attained and a working together along the same general line of action toward the realization of the common end.<sup>1</sup>

Hence there is a place for such an organization as the parent-teacher association. This does not mean that no other organization could perform the task to be done. Neither does it mean that the parent-teacher association is to be wholly approved as it now functions. How far it should be approved depends upon what it does or does not do in the light of what ought to be done by such an organization. In the next chapter we shall undertake to set forth the legitimate functions of a parent-teacher association.

**What school officers think of the parent-teacher association.** — Before turning to the consideration of the functions, it may be of interest to know how school officers evaluate the parent-teacher association. Of 390 replies <sup>2</sup> received from principals and

<sup>1</sup> Perry, Dora C. "The Place of Home and School Cooperative Organizations in the Attainment of Rural School Objectives," pp. 36, 37. Master's Thesis, Cornell University, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Only 390 out of the 797 officials to whom the inquiry was sent replied. It is possible, though not highly probable, that a large proportion of those who did not reply were unfavorable toward the parent-teacher association. In view of the fact that absolute secrecy

superintendents of the schools with which the associations here studied are affiliated, 2.1 per cent say that, *in their community*, they believe the association should be discontinued, 65.6 per cent approve its continuance along substantially its present lines, 28.2 per cent approve its continuance if redirected in certain ways, while 4.1 per cent did not answer the question. Those who recommend redirection of the association's activities mention most frequently the following points: closer adherence to stated objectives; interesting a larger number of parents and teachers; reducing the emphasis given to social and entertainment features; developing closer relations between parents and teachers; giving the school more hearty coöperation; learning more about modern educational ideals; putting the success of the school ahead of the success of the association; getting the support of men; keeping out of politics; and devoting less effort to raising funds.

regarding the judgment of the individual principal or superintendent was promised, I am inclined to think that lack of time rather than fear of saying what they really thought accounts for the lack of greater response.



## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT SHOULD PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS DO?

**Studying community needs.** — One method of determining scientifically what organizations or institutions are desirable in a given community is to discover the needs to be met in that community. The needs to be considered arise from the realization by the various citizens or group of citizens that something further should be done in order to achieve more fully the desired ends, whatever these may be. A detailed study of conditions in the average community of to-day would show, for example, needs relating to the protection of life, health safeguards, children's education, the food supply and other necessities, the intellectual stimulation of adults, the entertainment of young and old, the ministration to spiritual wants, etc. To meet such needs a government is organized in the community, and hospitals, schools, stores, literary societies, theaters, and churches are established.

Making such an analysis of the needed organizations in a given community is, however, not so simple as may first appear. It is not always easy to prove that there is sufficient need to warrant action. For example, are the health needs such as to justify

the maintenance of a hospital? Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a given need should be met by a new agency or by those already existing. Should a community chest, for example, be organized, or should charity needs be met by individuals and such agencies as the church, or fraternal organizations? Historically, we have had the same problem in education. For a long time the church assumed responsibility for providing educational facilities, but gradually a separate agency — the school — responsible to all the citizens of the community has taken over this function almost entirely. It is often difficult to determine where the line should be drawn as to the functions of two or more agencies in meeting a need. During recent years we have heard much about teaching the Bible in the public schools because many children are growing up without a knowledge of this great literary and spiritual heritage. Should the school be concerned with this problem or should it be left to the church and its subsidiary agencies — the Sunday school and the young people's societies? If the school should deal with it at all, should it confine itself to the literary and historical aspects only or may it deal also with the ethical and spiritual teachings? It is obvious that there are many ramifications to the problem, involving legal as well as educational and social questions. Finally, we should realize that as our ideals change, as environmental conditions are modified, or as scientific method reveals other needs, new questions arise as

to the functions of existing agencies or the necessity of creating new ones. Social organization cannot, therefore, be static in a progressive society, although the principles involved in such problems have not yet been definitely formulated by sociologists.

Only in recent years has there been a tendency to use a formal analysis of needs in determining the organizations in a community and their respective functions. As yet it has been used in only a very few situations. Generally, what has happened is that needs have been ascertained by general observation, and organizations established without much thought as to the details of function. Very often, too, an agency once established is continued along original lines even after the particular conditions that brought it forth have changed. This accounts for the present haphazard situation in many communities regarding the number and character of institutions and the functions which they actually perform.

A little reflection will enable one to realize the complexities involved in answering questions as to whether a parent-teacher association is justified, and, if so, just what its function should be. A brief discussion may, however, clear up some of the problems or at least permit a more explicit statement of them.

Should the work of the parent-teacher association be performed by a general-welfare agency? — This would mean that the organization concerned would be a coördinating agency dealing with such problems as health, government, education, recrea-

tion, and transportation. This is practically what the Virginia Coöperative Education Association is at the present time (see pp. 4-6). When the forerunner of the present National Congress of Parents and Teachers — the National Congress of Mothers — was organized in 1897, it had certain stated objectives, only two of which were directly related to school education. It was in fact an organization for general child welfare. As time has gone on there has been a growing tendency for the organization to direct its energy to those problems growing out of the relation of the school to the community. This is reflected in its change of name at different times (see pp. 6-7). Even yet "it has many lines of child-welfare activities, but sees in the parent-teacher work the most fundamental and far-reaching benefit to childhood."<sup>1</sup> At no time were its functions as broad as those of the Virginia Coöperative Education Association.

That the parent-teacher associations at present conceive their chief problem to be educational in the more limited sense may be seen from statements of officers. The 1924 Handbook of the National Congress says:

A parent-teacher association is an organization of parents, teachers, and others interested, for the purpose of studying reciprocal problems of the child, the home, and the school, and the relation of each to the community and the state, in order that the whole national life may be strengthened by the making

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook of Information about Parent-Teacher Associations and Mothers' Circles, 1924*, p. 3. (1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.)

of better, healthier, happier, more contented, and more intelligent citizens.

More specifically the 1926 handbook of the New York State Congress considers that

it is an organization which seeks to interest parents in the school life of their children, and to enable teachers to know the home life of their pupils — in order that the mental, physical, and moral life of the child may be understood and wisely developed.

From this evidence, similar statements, and data from associations regarding their activities (Tables IX and X), it seems clear that the typical parent-teacher association is largely an educational rather than a general-welfare agency.

At least two arguments may be urged in favor of having a general-welfare agency include the work of the parent-teacher association.<sup>1</sup> First, it would help coördinate the welfare efforts exerted in the community, and, after all, there is an intimate and vital relationship between good schools, honest government, proper health conditions, æsthetic houses, homes aware of their obligations, and proper recreation facilities. All look to the advancement of human welfare. <sup>2</sup>A second advantage would result from the tendency to reduce the large number of ineffective organizations, especially in the smaller communities.

Against such a coördinated welfare agency it may well be urged that there is danger of diffusion of energy. So many activities may be undertaken that effort is dissipated and the problems of education are neglected. Furthermore, there is the danger that

partisan politics or other objectionable interests may control the organization. An influential organization touching the entire community does, of course, attract the attention of those seeking personal advantage, while public sentiment is, perhaps, more likely to defend a purely educational organization against such persons.

The writer is inclined to believe that the educational needs of the community are sufficiently important to justify an organization largely devoted to them. However, it is clear that some important educational problems grow out of environmental situations that are not strictly educational. Selling cigarettes to young boys involves a problem of right development. A wise solution may necessitate pressure on those who sell cigarettes, or bringing governmental agencies to pass and enforce relevant laws. Though these ends might be accomplished more easily by a general-welfare organization, the latter might nevertheless be attacked by an association devoting itself largely to educational problems.

**Should the parent-teacher association deal with school problems only?** — The issue here is whether the association is to limit itself largely, at least, to those educational problems that center about the school, or whether it may properly concern itself with those problems arising from other experiences of the child. If the former view is held, the association may touch, for example, the play problem only as it involves the school. It may consider such

matters as the desirability of having a larger school playground, suggest this need to the school, call attention of the less alert members of the community to this need, and even raise funds to purchase more ground and provide for more adequate play equipment. This conception, however, would rule out of the association's consideration those play problems that grow out of home and general community environments. It would, for instance, largely rule out problems connected with providing proper reading materials through home or public libraries, the influence of the moving-picture shows and public dance halls, and health factors in home and community.

While the association can and should do much in connection with school problems, its unique opportunity seems to arise from those problems of an educational nature growing out of home and general community life or out of the relationship between these environments on the one hand and that of the school on the other. If the conception of education outlined in Chapter III is sound, these out-of-school experiences influence profoundly the final educational result. In this case an evaluation of all experiences in the light of their influence upon the growing child in reaching the ends we set up is desirable, and their coördination important. The school can do much, for example, in developing in the child a sense of responsibility, but the experiences in out-of-school life probably have even greater influence.

Hence the parent-teacher association seems to be the best avenue yet provided for effective coördination of the child's many educational experiences. This coördination is not dependent upon the association's possession of any legal responsibility in the matter. Legal responsibility belongs to the government and its properly authorized agents. Effectiveness in this coördination of experiences influencing the growing child depends, therefore, not upon legal authority but upon the insight, tact, and energy of members and leaders of the association. In the judgment of the writer, this fact strengthens rather than weakens the association. Apparently, the outstanding educational need is to make citizens so aware of the importance of, for example, the reading materials available to children, that they will learn what may be done in this direction. If legal action is necessary, there are governmental agents that may be called upon.

1. Assuming that the parent-teacher association should not confine itself to school problems but act as a coördinating educational agency with only indirect, moral control, it may nevertheless begin its activities from the school as a center. Here the most progressive educational thinking in the community is apt to be taking place. Sooner or later the school is likely to expose the limitations of out-of-school experiences manifested in such matters as poor health habits, the influence of improper moving-picture shows, wrong ideals of behavior, and poor taste in



dress. For this reason, the school affords the most likely stimulus to the work of the association. It is, of course, conceded that a group similar to the parent-teacher organization — such as a church child-study club — may center its activities about its own institution. When all community interests are represented, however, it would be well for some general community agency or institution to be the center.

2. Though the school is made the starting point for the work of the association, the latter should not subordinate itself to the wishes of school officials, who will, of course, have considerable influence in directing the association's attention to problems within its field. If the superintendent and board think the time inopportune for urging a school gymnasium, the association should give due weight to their judgment. If, however, the association is convinced that the school officials are under the influence of a few powerful taxpayers, they should feel free to act contrary to the advice given. Only in this way will the association be able to perform fully its responsibility to the community. At the same time action should be taken only as the result of a complete understanding of the situation, and, in doing so, infinite tact must be employed.

**The large functions of the parent-teacher association.** — If it is accepted as a sound policy that such an agency as the parent-teacher association should concern itself largely with educational problems, then it is clear that the large function of such an

organization is to aid in attaining the objectives of education however they may be conceived. Stated in terms of the general and specific objectives outlined in the preceding chapter, the parent-teacher association should aid in achieving growth in health, command of the fundamental processes, worthy home membership, civic participation, worthy use of leisure, moral character, and vocational ability.

**Limitations in association functions.** — But, since the parent-teacher association is not the only community agency concerned in education, it is obvious that this organization cannot do whatever it might wish. It must relate its activities to the other agencies. With the educational functions of these in mind, let us see what the parent-teacher association clearly should not undertake.

1. *It cannot have direct, legal control of the schools.* This function is delegated by law to representatives of the community and the state — trustee or trustees, the board of education, and the like. For example:

The trustees of school districts shall have the management and control of the public schools. (School Laws of Texas, 1922. Sec. 139.)

Except when otherwise authorized by law every school district shall be under the control of a board of school trustees. (School Law of California, 1925, Sec. 160.)

Some local associations have in effect taken the position that they represent the community more truly than the board of education. Association members should remember that their organization

seldom if ever includes all voting citizens, and they cannot claim to truly represent the entire community. They should remember further that their organization usually has no legal authority as related to the schools. With the present organization of education in America, confusion will surely result unless the legal responsibility for school control is defined and that responsibility definitely placed.

Of course the association may have an *indirect* control over the schools, as it is not likely that a board of education will be entirely uninfluenced by the parent-teacher association. If the association believes that a commercial curriculum should be provided in the high school, it may influence the board to the extent of taking favorable action. Should the board, contrary to the wishes of the community, believe such action unwise under existing conditions, new members can be elected from time to time until a board favorable to the project is secured. In either case, however, the board is responsible for the action taken.

The question is often raised as to whether a parent-teacher association should take sides in a school election. In the judgment of the writer, it should not do so. Individual members should, of course, exercise their citizenship rights, but the organization should be free to work with such officials as the community selects. Obviously it would be difficult for the association to secure the full

coöperation of a member of the board whose election it has opposed.

That the parent-teacher association should understand its limitations in regard to school control is recognized by the National Congress. In a list of "don'ts" we find: "Don't attempt to dictate the policy of administration of the school with which you are connected."<sup>1</sup> In several of the handbooks of state organizations similar statements are to be found.

2. *It is not the responsibility of the parent-teacher association to finance the schools.* — From the emphasis given in one form or another to this type of activity (see Table IX), apparently the basic principles of public-school financing, as now generally accepted by progressive thinkers, are not fully understood by parent-teacher associations.

In colonial days schools were supported largely from tuition fees and subscriptions, together with gifts and bequests of money, land, or other wealth. In New England, especially, these sources were soon supplemented by community or state appropriations and by taxation. Income from liquor and other licenses, from lotteries, and from taxes on banks frequently supplemented the school funds.

The development of the idea of public control and support of schools is one of the most interesting chapters in our educational history. "By 1825," says Cubberley, "it may be said to have been clearly

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook*, 1924, p. 14.

recognized by thinking men that the only safe reliance of a system of state schools lay in the general and direct taxation of all property for their support.”<sup>1</sup> But in practice this did not come until later. The rate bill continued in some states well toward the end of the century. This rate bill was a charge made against the pupil or his parents and was generally used as a supplementary form of income. As long as these rates were levied, schools were obviously not entirely free or open on equal terms to all. In Pennsylvania, rates were finally prohibited by law in 1834; in Illinois, in 1855; in New York, in 1867; and in New Jersey, in 1871. Usually this legislation was the result of prolonged and sometimes bitter discussion. We now have established in this country, however, the principle of public support of public schools, so that each person of legal school age may have opportunities without regard to the financial ability of his parents. We still have many problems of public school finance, particularly as related to methods whereby wealth may be taxed equitably and to the place of the state in school support. However, we are not likely to find a sounder principle for a democracy than that all wealth shall bear its just share of the costs of public education.

Obviously, if the parent-teacher association, with its membership of alert parents, undertakes too

<sup>1</sup> Cubberley, Ellwood P. *Public Education in the United States*, p. 131. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919.

much responsibility for raising funds directly, public support of schools might be endangered. The less interested in the community are usually quite willing to have others provide additional funds for schools. It relieves them of just that much in taxes.

This does not, however, preclude the parent-teacher association from engaging in certain types of activities to finance the school more adequately. How this may be done will be pointed out later (see pp. 64-67).

3. *The association should not undertake duties of a technical character for which the members are not prepared.* — Teaching is now generally recognized as a profession requiring special preparation. For those who are not prepared, state laws are making it increasingly difficult to get teaching positions, even if local boards are willing to appoint them. Passing judgment upon the instructional ability of Miss A, determining what is a reasonable teaching load for her, or indicating what should or should not go into the curriculum are technical problems. There are, of course, common-sense elements about these as about most problems, but wise decision involves the use of highly trained judgment. A parent-teacher association may do much harm by attempting to exert undue influence in such matters.

4. *The association has no authority over the various other agencies having educational influence.* — As previously suggested, it cannot say what the home, church, or theater shall or shall not do. The association may,

within limits, discuss educational questions involving these agencies, and it may, through influencing its members who are also members of the home or the church or other agency, influence their activities.

5. *The association should not, except in cases of emergency, undertake duties that are the primary responsibility of other agencies.* — If it is to be largely an educational agency, it will not attempt to perform the numerous activities of a community woman's club, of a charity organization, or of a literary club. It may engage in some activities ordinarily performed by these agencies but only insofar as it is desirable to meet a pressing need or to forward its own work. For example, it may provide spectacles for pupils who might otherwise suffer without them, particularly when there is no provision in the state law or no charity organization in the community for meeting needs of this type. Some associations may be justified in having topics or programs devoted to a discussion of new books or music or significant social problems, provided, however, that there are no other satisfactory agencies to meet these needs, that such topics aid in keeping members interested, or that undue emphasis is not given to them. The parent-teacher association should keep its educational objectives clearly in mind.

**The method here employed in setting up objectives.** — To determine the objectives of education, we study the problems and opportunities of life. Similarly, in finding the objectives of parent-teacher

associations, we analyze the needs that such an organization may undertake to meet. In endeavoring to get a reasonable determination of such needs the following procedures were utilized in this study:

1. In order to delimit the scope of the problem, the question was raised as to whether parent-teacher activities should be undertaken by an organization devoting itself largely to educational problems or by a general-welfare agency devoting itself to all types of community questions. We expressed the judgment that the argument favored an organization focusing its attention largely, at least, upon educational needs.

2. We undertook to show that while the parent-teacher association may well begin with the school as the center of its activities, its great opportunity lies in the coördination of the school and the out-of-school experiences of the child.

3. The main purpose of the parent-teacher association is to aid in the attainment of educational objectives. The principal objective, growth in right directions, and the seven subordinate concepts proposed by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education have been accepted as being as satisfactory as any we now have.

4. Since the parent-teacher association is only one of many agencies touching educational affairs, we should first eliminate those phases of the field that specifically belong elsewhere. The control of the schools and the primary responsibility for financing



them belong, under present conceptions, to the whole community or its legal representatives. Technical educational problems demanding specialized training should not be undertaken by such a group. The parent-teacher association may, however, deal with other educational needs.

5. As a means of knowing what these other needs are, a list has been made. The long list of activities actually performed by associations (see Table IX) were studied and those not ruled out for reasons given in "1" and "4" on page 56 have been set down. Other needs given in other sources that might be included have been added.

6. The many specific needs have been classified into a few groups. Since the personal equation enters here to a large degree, it is to be expected that somewhat different groupings would be made by other persons using the same original list.

**Objectives for parent-teacher associations.** — Such an analysis of needs shows that the association's biggest contributions are through coöperation in making other agencies more effective, rather than by assuming direct responsibility for definite aspects of the educational program.

It is obvious that intelligent coöperation is based on understanding, for no one can criticize the school constructively unless he knows what it is doing and has some insight into what it ought to do. Hence, of the six groupings of objectives finally made, one may be stated as:

1. *Giving members an understanding of the objectives and methods of the school.* — In this group would be included discussions on such topics as: what education is; what the teacher of Latin hopes to accomplish; the project in hygiene; the value of a course in community civics; why a school orchestra is important; homogeneous grouping of pupils to permit more individual attention; and the like. Through demonstration teaching or through visits to the school, association members may see what methods are being used and acquire some conception of our modern educational ideals. It is decidedly worth while to demonstrate one of the newer methods of teaching reading as contrasted with the alphabet method by which so many adults have acquired that tool; how spelling lists are made up from those words, often misspelled, which are actually needed by pupils in different grades; how geography may be vitalized by the imaginary trip or moving pictures; how children may be taught through oral English to speak with reasonable fluency and accuracy while standing and facing the class; or how more meaning may be given to literature through dramatization.

As the members of the parent-teacher association begin to understand the methods used in a modern school and to see the ideals back of them, they become more able to work constructively in meeting the second educational need.

2. *Learning to apply accepted educational objectives and methods to the out-of-school environment.* — The

home has opportunities, often overlooked or greatly neglected, for directing the proper growth of children.

It is here that right habits in such respects as manners, unselfishness, and respect for the rights of others may be so firmly established that they will be of lasting influence. Parents who understand the psychology of habit formation have a distinct advantage in achieving desired results. Many parents apparently do not realize the importance of such a basic factor in habit formation as consistent practice without exceptions. They require the child to retire at nine o'clock one night and permit him to stay up until eleven the next without apparent reason.

Parents likewise have an unusual opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility in children. This is only developed as children have the actual opportunity to perform duties assigned them. Each child should have his place in the family group, with such responsibilities as his development warrants. Washing dishes, making beds, keeping one's room in order, tending the furnace, and mowing the lawn involve considerable drudgery. They cannot be ignored and their necessity should be emphasized with responsibility equitably apportioned. Many home duties are more attractive — marketing for the family, planning the day's or week's menu, deciding what moving pictures or other entertainment the family should attend, and deciding what new article of furniture is most needed. Even if final decision is

made by the parents, it is worth while educationally for the younger members to participate in the discussion. As responsibilities are assumed the child learns something of the more common problems of everyday living as a member of an intimate group. He learns by failure and success. If parents realized the educational value of permitting and encouraging the boy to make a radio or to develop photographic films rather than having them ready made, more opportunities would undoubtedly be offered along this line. In an age such as this when most of our needs and luxuries are supplied cheaply by business concerns, we are in danger of neglecting the educational opportunities of the oncoming generation.

In the direction of ideals, in teaching the value of money, in developing appreciation of what is appropriate and what is inappropriate in dress, and in suggesting the right use of leisure hours, the home has unusual opportunity. In fact there are few, if any, experiences affecting the development of children and of young people in which the home may not have some influence. As the parent, trained to deal with these questions from the point of view of their educational effects, aids the work of other agencies in the community, he may help to reshape both their direct and indirect educational influences. To do this effectively it is necessary that there be an understanding of child nature. In view of the far-reaching effects of these out-of-school experiences — the theater, library, church, press, playground — on

child growth, the parent-teacher association may properly give considerable attention to the training of parents regarding accepted educational objectives and methods. It is here that the association probably has its greatest opportunity.

3. *Under certain conditions giving school officials opinions as to where the school fails or succeeds.* — The exercise of this function requires good judgment. Parents have an unusual opportunity to observe the effects of schooling and other experiences on their children. They may notice that the children are not able to solve accurately problems that arise involving mathematics, that they lack important facts in geography needed to read current news intelligently, or that they do not know how to study independently. They may, on the other hand, observe that their children read with unusual comprehension, that their knowledge of hygiene functions in daily life, or that they appear really to enjoy good books. In either case the school ought to know how well its pupils are meeting the problems of life. Where results are not all that may be desired, a tactful but frank discussion of what may be done in school or home or other agency may be very beneficial, while to know that one's efforts are producing desired results is always encouraging. Frequently, too, conferences between teachers and parents give information that may be very helpful in meeting the needs of particular children.

The obvious danger in performing activities of

this sort is that parents may go too far. They may insist that their point of view be adopted, when the professional officers with their greater insight may realize that it is neither feasible nor sound. It is important, therefore, that members of these associations realize that, after giving suggestions, their function in these matters ceases. Decision concerning the suggestions is a technical job that should be left to the teachers and supervisors under the general direction of the board of education. Hence, *it is doubtful whether a parent-teacher association should ever act as a group in evaluating the work of the school.* Not only may the same results be secured through individual members, but a group once aroused is not usually as reflective as the leading members of the group. Unless a parent-teacher association performs such activities in accordance with the conditions suggested, it is probably better that it leave them alone for the time being. Certainly the association must see to it that its machinery is not utilized by a disgruntled minority to achieve its own purposes.

At the same time the thoughtful school officer will realize that parents and citizens may contribute something to the better education of the children in the community and will not resent constructive criticisms tactfully made.

4. *Aiding to educate the community in desirable aspects of the school's program.* — In the long run, educational progress in a community depends upon the intelligent interest of citizens in the schools.

Since members of parent-teacher associations are often among the more alert in the community, they have the opportunity to understand what the school is trying to do and interpret it to the community. The facts regarding the need for a new school building may be presented to them, and they may influence others in the community to respond to this need. They may appreciate more readily than others the need for broadening the curriculum through music, art, agriculture, and commercial subjects. After witnessing a geography project demonstration, they may inform their neighbors of the advantage of this compared with the old, formalized learning of textbook materials.

5. *Facilitating acquaintance among parents and teachers.* — While some parents and teachers become acquainted without an organization promoting such relationships, they are facilitated by a parent-teacher association. In the associations studied, the proportion of all program items given to such activities amounts to 10 per cent in places of fewer than 2500 and 4 per cent in places over that size. These activities include not only whole evenings devoted to purely social affairs but also picnics, “welcomes” and “farewells” to teachers, afternoon tea parties at which teachers are the guests of honor, and parts of regular programs indicated as being of a purely social nature. Practically every program offers an opportunity for an informal reception.

Persons long established in a community often

fail to realize what it means to the teacher to be given an opportunity to know the adults among whom she is working. Indeed, public-school teachers in America are not given sufficient social recognition, and the parent-teacher association has a real opportunity to introduce more of the human elements that make teaching more attractive.

As parents come to know teachers as individuals rather than as parts of a machine, a relationship may be established permitting a frank and helpful exchange of views, and friction may thereby be reduced.

6. *Raising funds under special conditions.* — While it is unwise for the parent-teacher association to raise money to the extent of endangering our conception of public support, there are certain conditions which warrant participation of this kind:

a. Where schools cannot maintain acceptable standards due to the community's inability to provide the needed funds through public taxation, the association may provide the desired facilities. In parts of the country, parent-teacher and other associations have made the school yard attractive, put in new blackboards, purchased a modern heating and ventilating system, or even raised the teachers' salaries. Except in very poor communities, however, it is preferable for the parent-teacher organization to create public recognition of the need for better standards than to raise the money through its own efforts.



Just when conditions in a community justify the association in giving considerable energy to raising funds for the improvement of the school is difficult to determine. A school may be maintaining high academic standards but may lack an orchestra because there is no money to provide the instruments. Should the association meet the need? Probably the attitude of the association should be determined by the answers to the following questions: (1) Will the educational results in the community be better if energy is given to this instead of to other educational needs? (2) Is there danger of encouraging the community as a whole to expect the association to provide money for other needs?

b. Sometimes the association is justified in undertaking to finance a new phase of school work until its desirability and practicability in the community can be demonstrated. Hot lunches, a cafeteria, a part-time director for the glee club, and a larger school library are illustrations. With the practicability or impracticability of the enterprise demonstrated to the community at large, the association has performed its function as far as that particular activity is concerned, and may leave the work to community support.

c. When funds are raised by the association for improving the school, the expenditures should be made on the approval of the superintendent or principal and the board of education. These officers, being responsible to the community and the state

for the school, should have final decision as to whether the proposed expenditure would contribute to its welfare. If this procedure is followed, two possible dangers will be avoided. It will insure that the money is not wasted on a relatively unimportant school need, and it will prevent a possible interference with an existing or proposed school policy. An extreme case would be to provide for the increase of a particular teacher's salary contrary to the salary schedule of the school. Less serious, perhaps, would be to change the landscape of the school yard resulting in an interference with the playground, or to purchase play equipment unsuited to the particular conditions.

This restriction does not, of course, apply to the use of the association's money for educational purposes outside the school, as, for example, in providing play apparatus for the public park. Even then, however, the school officers may be able to give helpful advice, while the proposal should be approved by those officials responsible for the park.

d. The amount of energy given by any association to the raising of funds must be governed not only by such considerations as those suggested but by the educational needs of the community. The less objective needs, such as those suggested in the first four functions outlined on the preceding pages, are easily overlooked. These, however, are probably among the most pressing needs in most of our communities to-day. As these needs are recognized by

associations, and members are trained to meet them, we are likely to find that the emphasis given to money-raising activities will be reduced.

e. Some parent-teacher workers are inclined to defend money-raising activities as a means of providing work for its members. It seems to me that such activities are not legitimate unless regarded as a step toward the achievement of other objectives. Indeed, an association having no objectives besides raising money can hardly justify its existence unless conditions described in topics "a" or "b" are found.

f. The association may properly raise money for its own operating expenses, such as committee work, printing of programs, and sending of notifications. Since a membership fee sufficiently large to cover these expenses is often inadvisable, money must be raised in other ways. Obviously the principle of public support of schools is not compromised since the money is not used for the school itself.

**How school officers evaluate these objectives.** — The principal or superintendent of each school affiliated with the associations studied was requested to give his judgment as to the validity of each of the foregoing six objectives. The objectives approved were marked "yes"; those disapproved, "no"; and those partly approved, "partly." The 390 replies from officials were distributed as shown on Table II.

On the whole, the explanations of the partial acceptance replies indicates an acceptance of the objective when reasonably safeguarded. Most of

TABLE II

THE JUDGMENTS OF 390 SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS  
REGARDING THE VALIDITY OF THE SIX PROPOSED  
OBJECTIVES FOR PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

OBJECTIVE	NO ANSWER GIVEN	"No"	"Yes"	"PARTLY"
1. Giving members an understanding of objectives and methods of the school	6.6%	18.5%	53.6%	21.3%
2. Learning to apply accepted educational objectives and methods to the out-of-school environment	5.9	1.9	85.3	6.9
3. Under certain conditions giving school officials judgment as to where school fails or succeeds . . .	6.1	36.7	31.5	25.7
4. Aiding in educating the community as to desirable aspects of the school's program . . . . .	4.1	3.6	81.3	11.0
5. Facilitating acquaintance among parents and teachers . . . . .	3.3	1.9	94.1	0.7
6. Raising funds under special conditions . . . .	4.8	13.8	66.5	14.9

these safeguards have been suggested in the discussion of the preceding pages.

It will be observed that the "yes" answers exceed the "no" by a very substantial percentage in all except objective number 3, "giving school officials judgment as to where the school fails or succeeds." The explanatory notes for the "no" answers show

that these school officers fear a "meddling" attitude will be induced, the danger of which has been emphasized. Had the form sent out stated clearly that the judgment should usually be given by the individual member rather than by the association itself, it is possible that the negative replies would have been fewer.

These officials were also requested to rank the six objectives according to their importance.<sup>1</sup> The results are:

TABLE III

THE RANKING OF THE SIX PROPOSED OBJECTIVES BY 390  
SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS

FINAL RANK	OBJECTIVE	MEDIAN RANK
1	Facilitating acquaintance among parents and teachers	1.3
2	Aiding in educating the community as to desirable aspects of the school's program	1.9
3	Learning to apply accepted educational objectives and methods to the out-of-school environment	2.2
4	Giving members an understanding of objectives and methods of the school	3.1
5	Raising funds under special conditions	3.6
6	Under certain conditions giving school officials judgment as to where school fails or succeeds	4.3

<sup>1</sup> In stating these objectives on the Inquiry Blank, illustrations of each were given in order to prevent misunderstanding. That the order of their presentation did not appreciably influence the judgments is evident from a comparison with the rankings given above. On the blank the order of presentation was: 6, 5, 1, 3, 4, 2.

The median rank in the last column is of interest in showing how nearly the composite judgments coincide. There is, for example, a much greater difference between numbers 3 and 4 than there is between 2 and 3.

These judgments do not, of course, tell us what the objectives of parent-teacher associations should be nor how they should be ranked. They do, however, tell us what a fair number of professional persons in intimate touch with such organizations think about these matters. The results are enlightening but not conclusive. On the whole they substantiate the analysis made on pages 58-67.

**An evaluation of the programs and activities of the associations studied.** — The nature of our data permits, in most cases, only a general evaluation.

1. How far do these associations confine themselves to educational problems? One question asked on the inquiry blank was: "Does your association perform also the purpose of a general community club such as a woman's club, a literary society, and the like? If so, tell what it did last year of this character." It should be noticed that the illustrations given — a woman's club or a literary society — tend to suggest a more limited "general" club than one like the Virginia Coöperative Education Association. These replies show that in 5.7 per cent of the associations in places under 2500 and in 3.5 per cent in larger places, the parent-teacher associations were going beyond strictly educational problems. It is

perhaps to be expected, as Table IV shows, that associations in one- and two-teacher schools would confine themselves less strictly to educational problems than schools in larger communities. Usually very small communities have fewer organizations, and so any existing ones show more of a tendency to break over into other fields when important problems arise.

TABLE IV

DATA REGARDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE ASSOCIATIONS  
ALSO PERFORMED THE PURPOSE OF A GENERAL  
COMMUNITY CLUB SUCH AS A WOMAN'S CLUB  
OR A LITERARY SOCIETY

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION (NEW YORK ONLY)
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11 +	Total	
Number of as- sociations re- porting . .	115	104	189	153	561	144
Yes . . .	9.6%	4.8%	6.4%	2.6%	5.7%	3.5%
No . . .	90.4	95.2	89.9	96.1	92.7	96.5
Indefinite . .	0.0	0.0	3.7	1.3	1.6	0.0

Among the activities mentioned by the associations performing general functions also are: participation in general civic reforms; general charity work, such as raising the Red Cross quota and visiting the aged and sick; holding community "sings," picnics, movies, etc.; aiding in establishing general com-

munity health clinics; and forming and managing a public library. It is difficult to say just when a particular activity, for example, a discussion of road building, is a proper function of a parent-teacher association. If good roads have a direct bearing upon the educational problems of children, as in planning consolidated schools, then the subject is clearly a proper one.

Further light on this question may be found in Tables IX and X. Table IX (item IB) shows that 4.5 per cent of activities in communities under 2500 and 10.6 per cent in places over that size are devoted to providing money for activities outside the school (e.g., Red Cross and charity). Item VIII of the table shows also that 6.1 per cent of activities in the smaller places and 6.3 per cent in the larger ones deal with situations not primarily educational. The two items together account for 10.6 per cent and 16.9 per cent of the total number of activities. Table X (item VI) shows that in the places under 2500, 28.6 per cent of the "topics" on the program are devoted primarily to problems of adults and community. In the larger places 24.5 per cent of the topics are given to this group. While the activities and "topics" of the type described in most cases may have an important indirect value in influencing the educational experiences of children, one may well raise the question as to whether these are not being overemphasized to the neglect of other problems bearing more directly on the education of children.



A convincing answer cannot be made without considering each situation individually. This calls for self-analysis by local officials in terms of such ideals as those described in Chapter VII.

2. How far do associations attempt to interfere with the board or the professional staff in the control of the school? In answering this question a uniform meaning must be given to the term "interfere." The difference between attempting to *influence* school officials in, say, a policy of using the school building for community purposes and *interfering* with the officials in their administration of a policy already accepted seems to be largely a matter of degree. If influence is brought to bear too persistently, it has the effect of interference. Data in Table IX (item IV) on "attempting to influence board or teaching staff" represent activities that did not appear to reach the "interference" stage. These activities consisted in the passing of resolutions on school policies or the appointment of committees to confer with the school officers. While the wisdom of such group action is often open to question, it is not to be condemned in a wholesale fashion.

In analyzing the minutes of business sessions, particular attention was given to the securing of data on this question. It was expected that here, if anywhere, there would be comments or resolutions showing an attitude that might constitute "interference." It was surprising that only three or four such cases were found in the 887 sessions analyzed. More

convincing evidence came from an inquiry addressed to the principals and superintendents of the schools with which the associations studied were affiliated. In answer to the question: "Has your local association done anything this year that *interfered* with the Board of Education or the teaching staff in their work?" 1.1 per cent replied "yes"; 97.5 per cent, "no"; while 1.4 per cent answered "no" with reservations. In 6.9 per cent of the replies the "no" was emphatic. It should, however, be recognized that some superintendents and principals who believe that associations have interfered may have refrained from returning their blanks. How many of these, if any, there are we have no way of knowing. In spite of this possibility, it is fair to conclude that the evidence available in this study does not bear out the judgment sometimes expressed by professional officers, that parent-teacher associations tend to interfere with the control of the schools. If, however, a parent-teacher association will not do constructive work in its own legitimate field without interfering with the board or the professional staff, then school officers are right in demanding that it be eliminated until wise leadership is acquired. The National Congress itself frowns upon such interference.

3. Studying Table IX in the light of the six objectives suggested for parent-teacher associations, one is first of all impressed with the large percentage of activities (50.3 per cent and 41.1 per cent) devoted to providing funds. While we have no means

of measuring in the various communities the extent of such needs as buildings, library, and apparatus, for which funds were raised, the writer is inclined to believe that this phase of the work has been over-emphasized. Since these needs are usually the most obvious and most easily met by parents untrained in educational procedure, they are more likely to be attacked first.

It is true that when funds are raised for the library or for the playground, for example, another and a legitimate objective — proper use of leisure — is being met. The important point to remember, however, is that when an association raises money, energy of association members is taken from other problems that might yield a larger educational return.

One is also impressed by the few activities (1.3 per cent and 2.2 per cent) given to studying the educational needs of the community. In view of data presented in the next chapter regarding methods of preparing programs, this group of activities probably should be increased. Item III, "educating the community on school needs," is devoted too exclusively to the one problem of buildings, for the public should generally be educated on many additional matters. The 3 per cent, approximately, of activities given to forwarding the work of the association does not seem unduly large. Only when these activities emphasize merely the perpetuation of the organization rather than the fulfillment of its functions should there be criticism on this item.

In Table X there is little that warrants specific criticism except Group VI ("problems primarily of adults and the community"), which accounts for 28.6 per cent of the topics in places under 2500 and for 24.5 per cent in the larger communities. This group seems to be overemphasized if it is conceded that the parent-teacher association should direct its attention primarily to the educational problems of children of school age.

Ten per cent and 4.0 per cent of all items go to receptions. This does not seem unduly large in view of its importance. Doubt should, however, be expressed about the percentage of items going to entertainment — 48.6 per cent and 46.6 per cent. This seems a larger proportion than is necessary to stimulate interest in the work of the organization and to introduce a reasonable number of relaxation features.

Summarizing these conclusions, which obviously must be tentative, it would seem that these particular parent-teacher associations *as a whole* are:

1. Giving somewhat more attention to topics and activities dealing with adult and community problems than is desirable if the organization is assumed to devote itself largely to the educational problems of children of school age.

2. Not attempting to influence school officials to such a degree that it constitutes interference in school control.

3. Devoting too much attention to (a) entertain-

ment and to (b) providing funds, with a consequent underemphasis of other functions.

4. Giving too little attention to (a) studying the educational needs of the community and to (b) educating the community to an understanding of the school program.

Obviously these conclusions may not apply at all to some associations and with augmented force to others. We now turn to a consideration of program building for the individual association.

## CHAPTER V

### PLANNING PROGRAMS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES OF A PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

**Importance of programs.** — “A carefully thought-out program is as necessary to the success of an association as a well-planned course of study is to the school.”<sup>1</sup> In these words the National Congress vividly draws attention to the importance of program making. In fact its formal programs and activities constitute the course of study for the parent-teacher association. If that course of study is to prove adequate and effective, it must be carefully planned in the light of the problems that arise when an association undertakes to attain its desired objectives under the conditions existing in the community it serves. Casual thought on the subject is not sufficient.

**How programs are made.** — In this study the local officers were asked to check which method best described their procedure: (1) preparation of the entire year's program early in the year; (2) preparation of each program shortly before its presentation. From the data given it appears that there is little effort given to early program making. Of 550

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1926*, p. 33.

associations, 3.1 per cent hold no regular programs, while 32.7 per cent made indefinite answers to this question. Only 19.1 per cent follow the policy of preparing the entire year's program early in the year, while 45.1 per cent prepare each program shortly before its presentation. In the communities of 2500 population and over the situation is different. Here only 3.1 per cent returned indefinite answers, while 50.6 per cent make programs early in the year, and 46.3 per cent wait until shortly before the program is presented.

We cannot say that planning the entire year's program early in the year is clearly the better method. Such planning may be formal and unrelated to educational needs. Early planning does, however, *make possible* an analysis of the outstanding needs of the year and a development of the program in terms of those needs, whether concerned with health, morals, recreation, or what not. At the same time, it is to be feared that short-time preparation results too frequently in programs consisting of talent that is most readily available or of activities that may most easily be undertaken.

In making programs, less than 1 per cent of the associations, whether in places under or over 2500 population, utilize definite survey material. Such material usually indicates more exactly than is otherwise possible what the various educational needs are in the community and to what degree

those needs exist. Without such specific material, dependence must be placed upon general observation or analysis. That this latter method is sufficient in many cases is probably true. At the same time genuinely intelligent program making waits upon the use of exact data in revealing needs and their importance. The remainder of this section is accordingly devoted to illustrating what is meant in making a practical but careful study of needs for parent-teacher purposes. It is, of course, assumed that when an association undertakes to meet any needs shown to exist, it will confine itself to those activities that are within its proper function as described in Chapter IV.

**Measuring the educational needs of the community.** — An objective generally accepted in education is growth in worthy use of leisure time. As to what this constitutes must be determined partly by the standards of those about us and partly by our individual standards. If smoking is not considered harmful for a high-school boy, and learning "real life" by contacts not actually vicious seems a useful training, then moderate lounging on the street corner, in the cigar store, or in the pool room should not be condemned. Most parents, however, prefer other uses of leisure, while there is almost universal condemnation of reading modern sex literature, drinking, and late automobile rides. Not only must leisure activities themselves be considered but also the degree to which they are carried on.



In working toward worthy use of leisure in the community, several problems or needs must be coped with, such as trivial or degrading moving pictures, unfavorable play conditions, low-grade general reading, too frequent or undesirable dances. While different communities have more or less similar problems, conditions are usually so different in each community as to make its problems worthy of special consideration. For example, whether a public dance is undesirable depends upon the type of persons attending, their behavior, and the quality of the chaperonage. Hence it becomes important to know what are the problems in our community, what appears to be their relative significance, and to what degree they are serious. To answer these questions it is necessary to make a more or less detailed study of conditions in the community affecting the use children make of their leisure hours.

As suggestive of what may be done along this line, a general survey of some aspects of this problem was made in two New York villages. Village *A* is a community of about one thousand, located in the northwestern part of the state about eight miles from a city of half a million population. Village *B* is in the west central part of the state and has a population of about seven hundred. Both are agricultural villages with a large high-school attendance from the surrounding country. The nearest city to Village *B* is one of 18,000 population, twenty miles distant.

TABLE V  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LEISURE TIME GIVEN DURING ONE SCHOOL WEEK TO VARIOUS  
ACTIVITIES BY PUPILS IN GRADES 7 TO 12

The data include ninety-four pupils in Village A and seventy-four in Village B

TYPE OF ACTIVITY <sup>1</sup>	VILLAGE A Total	VILLAGE A		VILLAGE B		VILLAGE A		VILLAGE B	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Village	Country	Village	Country
<b>A. Intellectual and</b>									
aesthetic . . .	35.2	29.5	39.5	24.2	37.4	36.8	34.6	33.0	28.9
1. Study . . .	20.4	16.0	23.8	11.2	22.5	19.4	21.0	15.8	17.7
2. Reading . . .	13.0	12.4	13.4	8.4	10.7	15.1	12.0	12.6	6.9
3. Music . . .	1.8	1.1	2.3	4.6	4.2	2.3	1.6	4.6	4.3
<b>B. Physical . . .</b>	17.8	28.1	10.0	25.9	16.9	22.3	15.1	22.8	20.4
4. Games . . .	13.2	24.7	4.5	25.1	12.8	16.6	11.2	19.9	18.3
5. Walking . . .	3.6	1.9	4.9	0.8	4.1	3.0	3.9	2.9	2.1
6. Scouting . . .	1.0	1.5	0.6	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>C. Work about home</b>	20.0	22.4	18.2	21.1	21.2	15.8	22.4	14.2	27.2
<b>D. Social . . .</b>	5.6	2.7	7.8	11.4	12.0	5.0	6.0	15.3	8.6
<b>E. Entertainment</b>	7.4	8.1	6.9	3.2	1.8	7.8	7.1	2.8	2.2
7. Radio . . .	5.8	7.3	4.7	0.9	0.4	5.8	5.8	0.9	0.4
8. Movies . . .	1.6	0.8	2.2	2.3	1.4	2.0	1.3	1.9	1.8
<b>F. Miscellaneous</b>	14.0	9.2	17.6	14.2	10.7	12.3	14.8	11.9	12.7
9. Earning money	0.4	1.0	0.0	5.3	1.3	1.0	0.0	6.1	0.8
10. Loitering . .	2.7	3.5	2.0	3.0	2.6	3.5	2.0	2.2	3.3
11. Travel to school	2.2	1.0	3.2	2.8	1.4	0.8	3.1	0.0	3.9
12. Other <sup>2</sup> . .	8.7	3.7	12.4	3.1	5.4	7.0	9.7	3.6	4.7

<sup>1</sup>The letter and numbers given here correspond to the letters and numbers in Diagram 8.

<sup>2</sup>Includes: Riding, preparation for school, personal matters, sewing, church attendance (on week days only), etc.

With the coöperation of the principals and teachers in these schools, each pupil was requested to set down for one week in May his chief activities outside of the hours devoted to school, to meals, and to sleep. No effort was made to secure a record of every specific activity, but it was suggested that where several things were done during a given half-hour, only the one which took the most time should

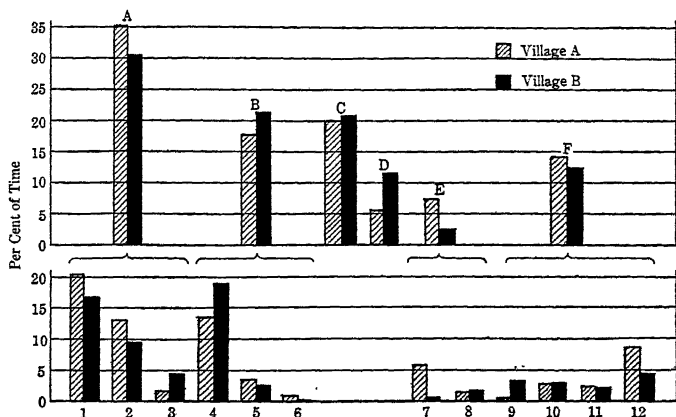


DIAGRAM 8.

A comparison between Villages A and B as to how pupils in grades 7 to 12 used their leisure hours during one school week. The different letters and figures correspond to the letters and figures given in Table V.

be reported. To attempt to use a unit smaller than a half-hour would, probably, have been useless since most pupils of this age do not carry watches and would not follow the time closely enough to give a more accurate account. The reader will recognize,

of course, that a similar record secured in, say, January would probably show a different distribution.

A comparison (Diagram 8) between these two villages as to the time given to the different types of activities shows a striking similarity, although some marked differences are found in such activities as the use of the radio, social activities, and the earning of money, for example. Scouting, however, is not carried on in Village *B*.

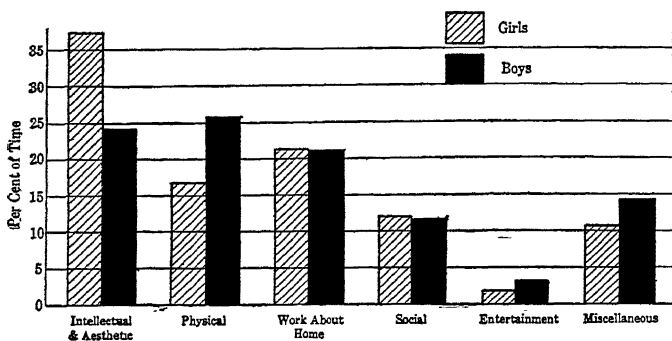


DIAGRAM 9.

Boys and girls of School *B* compared as to the use made of leisure hours during one school week. For detailed data see Table V.

Diagram 9 compares the activities of boys and girls in Village *B*. Girls give a larger percentage of time to intellectual and æsthetic activities. The detailed data given in Table V shows that this is due largely to the fact that the girls, compared with boys, give about twice the percentage of time to

study. Since the boys, as compared to the girls, give about twice the percentage of time to games, they show up better in the physical activities. Table V shows that the boys spend almost twice as much time in listening to the radio (though the proportion given to this activity is surprisingly small); four times as much in earning money; and twice as much in traveling to school. In most of the other activities the differences between the sexes are small. In Village A the girls give a little less than twice the percentage of time to study than these boys do; and three times as much to social activities; the boys twice the time to radio, a third of the time to moving pictures, half the time to music (though the proportion on this item is small), over five times as much to games, and twice as much to scouting.

In comparing village and country pupils of Village B, it is seen (Table V) that country pupils study a little more than village pupils; give about half the proportion of time to reading, to radio (which has small place among the activities), and to social matters; give twice the proportion to work about the home; and less than one-seventh the proportion to earning money. The large groups of activities are illustrated in Diagram 10.

It is interesting also to compare the distribution of activities of pupils in the junior high school (grades seven to nine) with those in the senior high school (grades ten to twelve). While there is not

space to present the data here, senior high-school pupils spend a larger proportion of time with the radio, much less time in games, more time in home work, and more time in earning money. In most other activities the two groups are not very different.

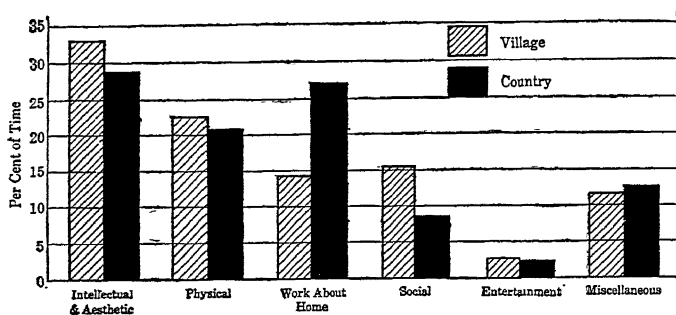


DIAGRAM 10.

Village and country children of School B compared as to the use made of leisure hours during one school week. For detailed data see Table V.

**Formulating the program in terms of needs.**—The thoughtful reader is likely to find several challenging problems as he studies the foregoing tables and diagrams. He may wonder, for example, why the country children in the high school of Village B read so little as compared with the village children. Do the village pupils read too much? Do the country children suffer from lack of sufficient reading material or do they have little time for general reading? The reader may also inquire why the boys in both high schools spend so much smaller propor-

tion of their leisure in study than do the girls. From the data in hand it would appear that one explanation is that the boys give much more time to physical activities. Do they give too much time to these and too little to their studies? Do they need special attention in order to create sufficiently strong motives for study, and do they need more favorable study conditions in the home? The reader is likely to ask why Village *B* does nothing in the way of scouting activities and Village *A* does so little. Of the total of eighty-five boys and ninety-five girls in grades seven to twelve, Village *A* has only eighteen boys and twenty-eight girls in the scout organization. Is Village *A* placing too little emphasis on music? Why do village children in *B* give so much more time to social affairs than those in the other community, and is this justified?

It is clear that these data raise more questions than they answer, but in that very fact is a part of their challenge. For example, the figures regarding the percentage of time given by boys to study may stimulate the parent-teacher association or a group of interested parents to pursue the question further. They may secure data for a week as to the details of home study; the time given to study; what conditions, if any, make the room in which they study uncomfortable and tend to distract their attention; whether they appear to be concentrating or "wool gathering"; what difficulties, if any, they have in doing home work successfully. The association might

then have at least one program devoted to the subject. That program might be somewhat as follows:

TOPIC: HOW MAY WE IMPROVE THE HOME-STUDY  
CONDITIONS OF OUR CHILDREN?

---

Music . . . . .	<i>Violin solo</i>
Statement of problem (three minutes) .	<i>Chairman of meeting</i>
Report of committee on home-study conditions (ten minutes) . . . . .	<i>Chairman of committee</i>
"What we expect of the home in the way of help on this problem" (fifteen min- utes) . . . . .	<i>Principal of high school</i>
Violin solo . . . . .	<i>Miss Blank</i>
"What constitutes effective study" .	<i>Professor from nearest normal school or from extension division of the university</i>
Discussion (fifteen minutes)	
Group singing (ten minutes) . . . . .	<i>Led by the teacher of singing in the public schools</i>

---

This program could, of course, be modified in a variety of ways to meet local conditions. It might properly be carried over into another meeting later in the year in order to give parents and teachers opportunity for an informal discussion of specific difficulties that arise in home study and of helpful methods of meeting them.

Another problem to which the association in Village B might devote at least one session is the desirability of developing a troop of Boy Scouts



and a similar organization for girls. The following program is suggestive of what may be done:

TOPIC: SHOULD WE ORGANIZE A SCOUT TROOP IN  
THIS COMMUNITY?

---

Music . . . . .	<i>Boys' high-school quartet</i>
"What scouting has done and can do for the youth of a community"	
(thirty minutes) . . . . .	<i>County scout executive or one from a nearby city</i>
Demonstrations of scout activities	
(thirty minutes) . . . . .	<i>Troop from a nearby vil- lage or city</i>
Questions and discussions (twenty min- utes)	
Music . . . . .	<i>Girls' glee club</i>

---

If the sentiment is favorable, the association may authorize a committee to consider the matter further: canvass the situation as to availability of competent leadership for the troop; investigate the desirability of various meeting places; suggest possibilities for participating in a county rally; plan monthly hikes; and negotiate regarding joint use of the summer camp belonging to the troops from the neighboring city.

Table V shows that in these two high schools pupils give 13 per cent and 9.5 per cent of their leisure to reading. What do they read? It is difficult to answer; obviously, if they are reading things of which they believe parents and teachers will not

approve, they may be quite successful in keeping this knowledge to themselves. Something may, however, be learned by parents if they take sufficient interest to inquire what in the daily newspaper has appealed to the boy, or notice the general type of periodical that he brings home. It is safe to say that a very large percentage of parents never go even this far; the significance of the boy's reading has perhaps not even occurred to them.

In Village A it was possible through the aid of the city librarian to get a record of the type of books drawn out by school children during one week. Seventy-two children called for seventy-three pieces of material. Of these, one belonged to the history and geography group, ten to classical fiction (such as the works of Scott, Dickens, and Cooper, for example), sixty to other fiction, one to drama and poetry, and one to general literature. The fact that a considerable amount of nonfiction was available at the library indicates its desirability; only one piece, however, was drawn. The main criticism of the reading habits indicated by this investigation is that too much time is devoted to material which is merely entertaining. We cannot, of course, contend that the reading habits of young people can be measured and evaluated solely on books taken from the public library. Probably a more reliable index would be the record of periodicals and books purchased, especially by young people, at the newsstands and bookshops.

In dealing with the reading of young people, two general principles should be kept in mind. First, habit has much to do with the character of the reading actually done. A boy whose principal leisure-hour reading is in those magazines devoted to impossible adventure, romance, and sex stories written in careless style, is unconsciously acquiring unsound standards of literary judgment. Related to this principle of habit is a second: to distract attention from an undesirable stimulus set up a counter-stimulus or experience. Violent parental objection to certain reading materials is not so likely to bring improvement as to drive such activities to cover. The availability of such periodicals as the *American Boy* or *Boy Life* (to name only two of several desirable ones) sets up counter attractions. These contain fairly well-written material on subjects that make a legitimate appeal to the boy's natural love of excitement. Continued reading of these tends to develop standards quite different from the type of material described before.

Keeping the undesirable reading material out of sight helps in keeping it out of mind. While legal methods may sometimes be used to keep the worst of it off the bookstands, it is doubtful whether this method, especially when publicity is attached, does more than create a morbid interest in the forbidden. Moral suasion through social pressure is likely to be much more effective with the booksellers. It may not be amiss to remind ourselves that the example

of older people in the community, especially parents, is a powerful factor in directing the reading of young people.

In these days this problem of proper reading is well-nigh universal. A program of a parent-teacher association may be organized in some such way as this:

TOPIC: THE READING HABITS AND STANDARDS OF  
THE COMMUNITY

---

Music . . . . .	<i>Piano solo</i>
What books and magazines are sold locally? (fifteen minutes) . . . . .	<i>Chairman of committee</i>
Recent additions to our public library (twenty minutes) . . . . .	<i>Mrs. Jones</i>
Play: A scene from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> . . . . .	<i>Ninth-grade English class</i>
The most worthwhile book I have read recently (ten minutes) . . . . .	<i>Mrs. White</i>
A community book club:	
What it is; how it is organized; how it operates (twenty minutes) . . . . .	<i>Mrs. Brown</i>
Group singing . . . . .	<i>Led by teacher of music in public schools</i>

---

A second program might be:

TOPIC: THE READING HABITS OF CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE

---

Music . . . . .	<i>Quartet</i>
What books are chosen from the public library by school children? (twenty minutes) . . . . .	<i>Chairman of committee</i>

- What periodicals suited to children are  
taken in representative homes?  
(twenty minutes) . . . . . *Chairman of committee*
- A list of suitable periodicals for children  
of different ages (twenty minutes) . . . *High-school teacher of  
English*
- Additional facilities needed by the pub-  
lic library to meet needs of school  
children (twenty minutes) . . . . *The librarian*
- Some experiences in directing the read-  
ing of children (fifteen minutes) . . . *Mrs. James*
- Music . . . . . *Girls' glee club, public  
schools*

In dealing with reading habits and standards, particular caution is needed. Some people resent even the implication that their reading standards are not good. Some will consider it no one else's business what periodicals come into their homes. As to how far it is wise to go in getting certain kinds of facts must, of course, be settled in terms of influences and personalities affecting each situation. One of the most immediately helpful topics in the programs given above is that by Mrs. James devoted to her experiences in directing the reading of children. But to do this effectively, Mrs. James must be well read, tactful, and tolerant, with a keen sense of humor. The children she refers to should not be known to those present or should be of sufficiently advanced age not to object to being the subject of discussion at a public gathering. The difficulty of getting persons in such an organization to consider as sacredly confidential any exchange of

experiences among parents is a serious limitation in using one of the most useful devices parent-teacher associations may employ.

The foregoing merely illustrate suitable problems local parent-teacher associations may study carefully in dealing with the problem of wise use of leisure hours. Among other factors involved are: the character of the motion pictures presented in the community; local opportunities whereby young people may earn spending-money; character of radio programs; types of games played by children; conditions under which they play. In connection with the two problems last named, data were collected in both the villages referred to above. There is not space to give detailed results here, but in general the analysis showed the desirability of providing better playground facilities. In one of the villages this was especially true because the children found it necessary to do much of their playing on the main street. Since this street was a main automobile thoroughfare, its limitations as a playground are obvious.

There are, of course, many problems connected with the attainment of other educational objectives (see pp. 29-31). A whole multitude are concerned with the development of such phases of worthy home membership as the attitude of members of the family toward one another, opportunities for wholesome relaxation, and encouragement of responsibility through wise delegation of duties among members

of the family group. There are problems connected with the health of school children: diet; regulation of sleep and of late hours; medical inspection program through the school; and physical training, including preventive and remedial health education. Other problems in other fields will readily suggest themselves to the reader.

**How far is such program planning practicable? —** Although the advantages of these methods of attack are obvious, many difficulties must be considered. Parent-teacher workers are, for the most part, busy people with many other responsibilities. They are usually untrained in using scientific procedures in collecting data, and too frequently prefer a program of entertainment rather than of instruction.

If necessary, the first difficulty may be met by reducing the number of programs held or other activities engaged in. A few meetings or activities, wisely planned and involving vital local problems, are worth far more than frequent meetings carried out in a slipshod, half-hearted manner. Lack of training in collecting data of the type indicated may be partly overcome by securing the help or at least the advice of the principal or of one of the teachers. As a matter of fact the chief requirements for obtaining much of the data needed are good sense, persistence, and reasonable care in making the data as accurate as possible. There probably is not a community that would attempt parent-teacher work that has not several persons with such charac-

teristics. The desire for entertainment should be recognized in the plans of even those organizations made up largely of serious-minded people. An association is not to be condemned for offering entertainment features, but rather for offering them beyond the point that is necessary to enlist the coöperation of the average parent, or that will make impossible a constructive attack on real educational problems.

One ever-present danger in parent-teacher organization is diffuseness in activities. Few organizations depending upon volunteer service can expect to carry through several major projects in a single year as the necessary energy is not available in the typical association. It is far better to select two or three important needs upon which to concentrate. A state-wide attack on important problems, as suggested in the programs issued by some state organizations, has definite advantages providing more vital local needs are not neglected.



## CHAPTER VI

### PROBLEMS OF MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

**Age of associations.** — While a few associations had been organized as long as twenty-five years at the date of the study in 1924-25, the typical association is quite young. Table VI shows that the median <sup>1</sup> age of the 124 associations in one- and two-teacher schools was at that time 2.6 years, the range in age being from less than one year to thirteen years. The median age increases with the size of the school up to five years in places of 2500 and over population. The median period for which these associations have been in *continuous* existence is very slightly lower than the figures just given. This means that relatively few have had to be reorganized. Ninety-four per cent have had continuous existence since first established, while only 5.5 per cent have been reorganized once, and 0.5 per cent twice. These figures probably suggest a more optimistic judgment regarding the continuous functioning of parent-teacher associations than is justified.

<sup>1</sup> The median is that figure above and below which are to be found an equal number of cases. When we say, for example, that the median number of years since the first organization of associations in schools of one or two teachers is 2.6, we mean that there are as many associations younger than that age as there are older.

TABLE VI

AGE OF ASSOCIATIONS AT THE DATE OF THE SCHOOL YEAR  
1924-25 AND THE NUMBER OF TIMES THEY HAVE  
BEEN REORGANIZED

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION (New York only)
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+	Total	
Number of asso- ciations re- porting . .	124	116	196	155	591	156
Median number of years since first organiza- tion . . .	2.6 yrs.	3.0 yrs.	3.9 yrs.	4.6 yrs.	3.7 yrs.	5.0 yrs.
Range — from less than 1 yr. to . . .	13 yrs.	14 yrs.	25 yrs.	25 yrs.	25 yrs.	25 yrs.
Median number of years in con- tinuous exist- ence . . .	2.5 yrs.	2.9 yrs.	3.7 yrs.	4.2 yrs.	3.5 yrs.	4.8 yrs.
Range — from less than 1 yr. to . . .	13 yrs.	14 yrs.	22 yrs.	25 yrs.	25 yrs.	25 yrs.
Number of times reorganized						
None . .	122	111	175	143	551	151
Once . .	2	4	20	11	37	4
Twice . .	0	1	1	1	3	1
Three times or more .	0	0	0	0	0	0

Undoubtedly there were during these years a number of locals that were discontinued and therefore would not be included in this study. It has not been possible to discover their number, but a complete picture cannot be presented until these facts are known.

**Size and sex membership.**—Table VII shows the median membership of parent-teacher associations for schools of different size in each of the nine states. As might be expected, the median size increases proportionally with the size of the school. No one state has the highest median in all four groups of schools in places of fewer than 2500. New Jersey has the largest membership for schools with one and two teachers, first rank in the other groups being held by Michigan, California, and Ohio.

In median average attendance (Table VII) the group of schools with eleven or more teachers holds first place, while the group composed of schools of from three to five teachers ranks lowest. Michigan, New York, and Iowa have the best records in each of the four groups, Iowa being superior in both the "6-10" and in the "11+" groups. There are some rather striking differences in median percentage in attendance not only among the different groups but even within the same group. The lowest percentage is found in California in the "6-10" group and in Texas in the "11+" group, while the best record (96.0 per cent) is held by Iowa in the "11+" group.

TABLE VII

MEDIAN PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP AND  
 MEDIAN PERCENTAGE IN ATTENDANCE. (NO MEDIAN IS  
 GIVEN WHERE THERE ARE FEWER THAN TEN CASES)

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11 +	Total	
Number of as- sociations re- porting . .	117	108	172	144	541	144
Median mem- bership:						
California .	28	44	66	80	51	86
Iowa . .			54	69	58	
Michigan .	22	49	44	74	40	
New Jersey	32	46	56	68	45	
New York.	16	35	49	84	42	
N. Carolina			44		44	
Ohio . .			64	104	71	
Texas . .			37	60	39	
Virginia .					49	
Median mem- bership for all 9 States . .	23	42	50	75	47	
Median percent- age in attend- ance:						
California .	52.6%	43.5%	38.5%	40.6%	44.2%	51.0
Iowa . .			88.5	96.0	83.8	
Michigan .	64.5	55.2	68.5	73.5	66.0	
New Jersey	40.0	41.4	39.5	63.5	41.8	
New York.	55.2	56.6	58.0	54.8	56.3	
N. Carolina			54.1		60.7	
Ohio . .			71.3	71.8	71.8	
Texas . .			43.2	38.5	40.7	
Virginia .					63.5	
Median percent- age in attend- ance for all 9 States . .	52.6	47.5	57.7	60.7	54.7	

In the "6-10" group, variations are found from 38.5 per cent in California to 88.5 per cent in Iowa. The lowest record for all groups is in Texas with New Jersey and California not much ahead. Iowa has by far the best record. It would be worth while for each state to secure data concerning probable factors influencing attendance.

Although fathers should, of course, be as concerned about parent-teacher work as mothers, we know that as a rule they have not taken such an active part. In all associations located in places of fewer than 2500, the median percentage of male members is 23.7. In these smaller communities there is little difference in the percentage among schools of different size, but in the New York communities of 2500 or more the percentage of men drops almost one-half, or to 12.1 per cent. Probably an important factor influencing this smaller percentage of men enrolled in parent-teacher associations in the larger places is the greater variety of activities dividing their attention.

**Members who are not parents.** — If the functions of parent-teacher associations analyzed in Chapter IV are accepted as sound, it follows that the membership should not be confined to parents. In all places of fewer than 2500, the median percentage of the membership composed of those who are not parents is 11.7. It is interesting to note that, with one exception, this percentage decreases as the size of the school increases. In schools of one and two

teachers it is 16.3 per cent; in the schools with three to five teachers, 10.5 per cent; in the schools with six to ten teachers, 12 per cent; and in those of eleven or more teachers, 9.5 per cent. In the New York communities with 2500 or more population this percentage is only 5.6. It is probable that the paucity of other activities in small places accounts for their relatively high membership among non-parents. Further details may be found in Table XI, p. 132.

**School homes represented in the association.** — The more nearly a parent-teacher association membership represents all the homes of the community, in which there are school children, the more able that association should be, other conditions being equal, to perform its functions. Data for the one- and two-teacher schools show a median of 83.8 per cent of parents represented in the parent-teacher association. The decrease in this percentage is proportionally consistent from the smallest to the largest schools. In schools with three to five teachers the percentage is 53.7; six to ten teachers, 42.8 per cent; eleven or more teachers, 32.2 per cent. In all communities of fewer than 2500, the figure is 49.7 per cent, while in the New York communities of 2500 or more it is 30.3 per cent. Table XII, p. 133, gives some interesting variations among the nine states.

**Teachers who are members.** — Naturally, it is important that teachers take an active interest in the work of the association. Our records show that

the percentage of associations in which all teachers are members decreases as the size of the school increases. One- and two-teacher schools have a 100 per cent teacher membership in 95.4 per cent of the associations; schools with three to five teachers, in 88.5 per cent of the associations; with six to ten teachers, 73.9 per cent; with eleven or more teachers, 59.3 per cent. For all associations in places of fewer than 2500, the figure is 77.5 per cent, while in those of 2500 or more it is 57.4 per cent. One may expect to find such a relationship between the size of the school and the teacher membership, since the smaller the teaching force the more likely each teacher is to feel a personal responsibility.

Membership in the association does not, of course, indicate that each teacher is exerting a constructive influence. A hopeful situation is, however, revealed by the fact that in 95.6 per cent of all associations in communities of fewer than 2500, one-half or more of the teachers are members, while in places over 2500 as many as 79.4 per cent of the associations include one-half or more of the total number of teachers.

**Teachers as officers and chairmen of committees.** — Teachers also aid by serving as officers and chairmen of committees. They should not accept positions — particularly the most responsible ones — too frequently, since the organization may lean too heavily upon them. The term “teachers” as used here also includes principals and superintendents.

TABLE VIII  
NUMBER OF OFFICES AND CHAIRMANSHIPS, SHOWING FRE-  
QUENCY WITH WHICH THESE ARE HELD BY TEACHERS

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION (New York only)
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+	Total	
Number of offices in association						
Median . . .	4.6	5.3	4.8	5.1	4.9	5.8
Largest number .	10.0	10.0	9.0	16.0	16.0	9.0
Median percentage held by teachers	23.2	15.8	25.6	26.8	24.7	19.6
Number of chair- manships in asso- ciation						
Median . . .	3.2	4.2	4.7	5.0	4.5	5.3
Largest number .	12.0	20.0	50.0	18.0	50.0	21.0
Median percentage held by teachers	17.5	20.8	15.0	5.0	13.8	12.0

The accompanying table shows that the median number of offices varies from 4.6 to 5.8 in schools of different size, and that the median percentage of these offices held by teachers varies from 15.8 to 26.8 per cent. The median number of committee chairmanships varies from 3.2 to 5.3, and the median percentage of these held by teachers varies from 5.0 to 20.8 per cent. On the whole these data do not indicate that teachers are dominating the associations so far as this may be revealed by the percentage of all such positions held by them. In 32.4



per cent of all associations in communities of fewer than 2500, no offices were held by teachers, while in only 0.4 per cent of these associations, they held all the offices. In 36.9 per cent of the associations in the large communities, no teachers held offices, and there were no associations of this type where all offices were held by teachers. In 46.2 per cent of the associations in the smaller communities, no teachers served as chairmen, while in the larger communities this percentage was but slightly lower — 45.8 per cent. Teachers held all the chairmanships in 2.5 per cent of the associations in smaller communities, and 3.5 per cent in the larger places.

One may question the wisdom of having as many offices and chairmanships as do some associations. Overorganization may justly be suspected in cases where, affiliated with a school of one or two teachers, an association has ten offices and twelve committee chairmanships, or where, considering all schools located in places of fewer than 2500, some associations have sixteen offices and fifty chairmanships! Under ordinary circumstances it is difficult to see how associations of this size can find that number of members with the right type of leadership, or that number of activities related to a well-directed program for the year. A few alert officers and committee chairmen are far more effective than a larger number including many who are inactive.

It is interesting to see which offices and chairmanships are held most frequently by teachers. The

following percentages show the distribution of chief offices held by teachers.

OFFICE	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION	2500 OR MORE POPULATION
President . . . . .	5.1%	3.9%
Vice-President . . . . .	38.4	43.4
Secretary . . . . .	31.2	30.2
Assistant Secretary . . . . .	0.8	0.8
Secretary-Treasurer . . . . .	2.8	0.0
Treasurer . . . . .	14.7	14.7
Assistant Treasurer . . . . .	0.0	0.8
Press agent . . . . .	2.1	3.1
Historian . . . . .	3.3	0.0
Auditor . . . . .	1.3	2.3
Critic . . . . .	0.3	0.0
Honorary President . . . . .	0.0	0.8

In general, teachers hold the subordinate offices — the vice-presidency, the secretaryship, or the treasuryship in particular — giving them an opportunity to serve and aid in directing policies without being chiefly responsible for their administration.

A large number of different chairmanships are held by teachers, those most frequently held being concerned with programs, publicity, entertainment, membership, social welfare, and finance. Since program committee chairmanships constitute one-third of all chairmanships so held, alert teachers, seeing clearly the functions of the organization, may render significant leadership in one of the most vital phases of the work.

The parent-teacher association in the school of one or two teachers. — Is the very small school handicapped when it comes to maintaining a successful parent-teacher association? Though we have generally been inclined to think this is true, nevertheless the data secured in this study regarding organization and membership do not justify such a conclusion.

Associations in one- and two-teacher schools have a better record than the others as to stability of organization (Table VI). In the case of these, only 1.6 per cent have been reorganized as compared with 6.8 per cent of all associations in places of less than 2500 and 3.2 per cent in places of 2500 or more. However, it should be recognized that this superiority may be due to the fact that associations in the smaller schools have gone out of existence more frequently than those in the larger schools. Associations no longer functioning naturally did not send in reports; hence, if associations were discontinued more frequently in schools of one size than in those of another size, our data would be misleading. It might be said also that, since associations in one- and two-teacher schools are somewhat younger (Table VI), they are still under the influence of the impetus of their original organization and that the crucial test will come later. However, the difference in age between associations in the smaller and in the larger schools is so small — less than one-half year — that it is doubtful whether this factor, if important

at all, would have greater influence in one group of schools than in another.

While the association membership in the one- and two-teacher schools is, as would be expected, smaller than in the larger ones, there is slight difference in the median percentage in attendance; in fact the percentage is 52.6 per cent as compared with 54.7 per cent in all places of fewer than 2500 and 51.0 per cent in places over that size. In percentage of male members, associations in one- and two-teacher schools have practically the same figure as those in other communities of less than 2500, while the percentage is almost twice as large as in places over 2500. At the same time in these very small schools there is a much larger percentage of associations having no male members.

Associations in very small schools have a much better record in the percentage of homes with at least one member in the organization (Table XII), in percentage of members who are not parents (Table XI), and in percentage of all teachers who are members.

Certainly these figures do not indicate that the association in the school of one or two teachers is more handicapped concerning organization and membership than the association connected with a larger school.

**Why members drop out.** — To discover accurately why members drop out demands a different type of data from that which we were able to secure in this

study. Such data would call for a local study of each case by an experienced investigator. Although this procedure was not practicable here, the general reasons for dropping out, as analyzed by the reporting officers of the local associations, were secured. The reports given in Table XIII, page 134, are of some interest and value. The percentage of associations reporting no difficulty along this line is larger than one might expect, varying from 21.5 to 34.4 per cent.

The large percentage (27.9 in the smaller communities and 26.9 in the larger ones) due to families moving away is not, of course, under the control of the associations. "Lack of interest" (19.2 and 10.8 per cent) is a general term covering numerous specific reasons which must be discovered for each case before the most effective methods for developing interest can be planned. "Lack of time" (11.8 and 9.2 per cent) and "other interests" (6.1 per cent and 4.6 per cent) are in many cases merely lack of a compelling interest in the work of the parent-teacher association. "Personal quarrels" (6.7 and 3.1 per cent), "want entertainment" (3.0 and 0.8 per cent), "no value in program" (2.4 and 2.3 per cent), and "feel neglected" (1.2 and 4.6 per cent) suggest particular difficulties that associations must meet.

While these general reasons for dropping out are suggestive, it is obvious that different factors will be responsible in different communities, and the question needs more intensive investigation than we

have been able to give it in this study. Each association should, therefore, make a study of its own conditions as affecting this problem.

**Methods found helpful in arousing and retaining the interest of parents.** — Table XIV summarizes the judgments of local officers as to the methods they have found helpful. There is probably considerable overlapping among the classifications, but five methods appear to have been particularly useful. These are: “get togethers” with refreshments; programs by children; entertainments; attendance contests; and outside speakers. Of course, these methods are merely suggestions; each association must choose the ones most suitable for its particular difficulties in arousing and keeping the interest of parents.

## CHAPTER VII

### MEASURING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF A PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION AND STIMULATING ITS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

**Minimum standards for associations.**—As a means of enabling an association to determine whether or not it is doing satisfactory work, the National Congress has set up certain standards. It has recognized two groups of associations—the “standard” and the “superior.”

The specific requirements<sup>1</sup> for the first group follow.

#### GROUP I—STANDARD ASSOCIATION

1. *Membership:* Membership dues from at least 50 per cent of the homes and teachers.
2. *Attendance:* A yearly average attendance of at least 60 per cent of the membership.
3. *Committees:* Standing committees to include membership, program, publicity, and hospitality. These must be active, working committees.
4. *Meetings:* At least six regular meetings held during the year.
5. *Dues:* State and national dues for each enrolled member sent by the local treasurer to the state treasurer, in accordance with the rulings of the state by-laws.
6. *Program:* General outline of year's program planned in advance, using at least four of the subjects for programs given on page 37 of the *Handbook*.

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1926*, pp. 47, 48.

7. *Publicity*: Local publicity chairman to have followed plans for publicity as submitted by the state publicity chairman, and to have furnished regular news concerning the activities of the association to the local papers.
8. *Child-Welfare Day (Founder's Day)*: A Child-Welfare Day program in February, and gift sent to the National Congress for state extension work.
9. *Subscriptions*: At least 10 per cent of the membership subscribers to the *Child Welfare Magazine*.
10. *Partisanship*: Freedom from political and sectarian partisanship and from promoting commercial enterprises.
11. *Rules*: A reasonable observance of parliamentary law, and provisions in the by-laws for regular election of officers.

An association which meets the foregoing standards may endeavor to become a superior association.

#### GROUP II — SUPERIOR ASSOCIATION

1. *President's Messages*: Presenting or reading at each regular meeting short messages from the national and state presidents. (See *Child-Welfare Magazine* and *State Bulletin*.)
2. *Representation*: Delegates sent to the district and county council meeting when held within reasonable distance. (City associations send delegates to city council.)
3. *State Convention*: At least one delegate sent to the state convention, preferably the president, with expenses paid.
4. *Extension*: One new association organized or assistance rendered to one in need of help.
5. *Preschool circles*: At least one active preschool circle within the school district in membership with the state and national Congress, either as a separate association or with the membership dues paid through the treasurer of the local parent-teacher association.
6. *Committees*: Having, in addition to the local committees — membership, program, hospitality, and publicity — at least six standing committees coöperating with and re-



porting to the corresponding committees in the state organization.

7. Points 1 and 9 of Group I to read: Membership of at least 75 per cent of the parents and teachers. At least 15 per cent of the membership subscribers to the *Child-Welfare Magazine*.

Such standards are very useful in suggesting to associations definite methods by which to measure their achievements. These standards, however, deal largely with the organization and administrative aspects of an association, which, although important, are only means to the end of planning and carrying out the purposes for which the association exists. These purposes, together with the means for attaining them, should have a large place when the work of the organization is evaluated.

Furthermore, the standards given above are in reality *minimum* standards. They are the lowest achievements that are acceptable if an association is to be classified as "standard" or "superior." As a supplement to these useful minimum standards it is desirable for an association to have some means of measuring itself in terms of a realizable ideal.

**A self-measuring scale for associations.** — Accordingly a device is presented that attempts to meet both limitations just mentioned. It includes not only organization and administrative standards but also those concerned with activities as they are planned and carried out. The items included are placed in the form of a scale so that an association can see whether it ranks high or low when measured

by the standards. If 100 points represent a realizable ideal, an association may, by means of this scale, tell whether it is entitled to 25, 60, or 90 points.

*How the scale was devised.*—The material collected in this study gives a fairly accurate picture of what associations are now doing. In the light of our present conception of education we have evaluated what associations are doing and have set up certain proposed objectives. We have also secured data concerning such matters as methods of program planning, size and character of membership, and teacher participation in association work, and have drawn conclusions regarding desirable practices in these matters. While available data do not enable us to settle most of these questions with finality, they nevertheless suggest tentative conclusions. This scale utilizes, as far as possible, the data collected and the conclusions drawn in this study.

The scale is organized on a functional basis. It considers first what is undoubtedly the most important problem of a parent-teacher association—its programs and activities. In attacking this large problem the scale suggests that there be a preliminary meeting of the executive committee to consider general plans for the year. Attention is then directed to the methods of planning programs and activities. The next item, the year's objectives and their attainment, is, according to the suggested values, the most important in the list. Other general problems relating to the nature of the activities and

the attitude of the association toward its problems are then taken up. Following a consideration of the programs and activities, come important items relating to administration and to membership.

The scale is divided into two parts: (1) the items in the scale, together with a suggested value for each; and (2) definitions and standards for interpreting these items. The value given each item is the combined judgment of 113 parent-teacher workers, principals, and superintendents. If the writer were giving his own judgment as to the relative value of these items for most associations, he would be inclined to increase to about 10 points the value given IB, and to about 25 the value for IC. He would then reduce the values given some other items, particularly IA, IID, and III.

A SELF-MEASURING SCALE FOR PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS  
(Devised by Julian E. Butterworth, Cornell University)

ITEMS	1*	2*	3*
I. Programs and Activities			
A. Preliminary meeting of the executive committee for making general plans <sup>a</sup>	6		
B. Methods of planning programs and activities . . . . .			
1. Definite study of educational needs <sup>b</sup> . . . . .	4		
2. Preparation of programs early in the year <sup>c</sup> . . . . .	2		
3. Focusing of programs upon relatively few needs <sup>d</sup> . . . . .	2		

A SELF-MEASURING SCALE FOR PARENT-TEACHER  
ASSOCIATIONS (*Continued*)

ITEMS	1*	2*	3*
C. The year's objectives and their attainment <sup>e</sup> . . . . .	16		
1. Giving members an understanding of the objectives and methods of the school . . . . .			
2. Teaching members to apply accepted educational objectives and methods to the out-of-school environment . . . . .			
3. Facilitating acquaintance among parents and teachers . . . . .			
4. Aiding in educating the community to desirable aspects of the school's program . . . . .			
5. Raising funds under certain conditions . . . . .			
6. Under certain conditions giving to the school officials judgment as to where the school fails or succeeds . . . . .			
D. Maintaining a reasonable balance between entertainment and non-entertainment features <sup>f</sup> . . . . .	3		
E. Reasonable adherence to educational problems of children as contrasted with general community problems <sup>g</sup> . . . . .	5		
F. Noninterference with work of board or teaching staff <sup>h</sup> . . . . .	5		
G. Percentage total membership utilized during the year in some way . . . . .	4		
H. Extension work <sup>i</sup> . . . . .	4		

A SELF-MEASURING SCALE FOR PARENT-TEACHER  
ASSOCIATIONS (*Continued*)

ITEMS	1*	2*	3*
II. Administration			
A. Committee organization <sup>f</sup> . . . .	4		
B. Financial policies			
1. Preparation of budget early in year . . . . .	2		
2. Reasonable adherence to this budget . . . . .	2		
C. Promptness in attending to state and national business . . . . .	3		
D. Dignified publicity of parent-teacher matters . . . . .	4		
E. Sending delegates to state and district conventions . . . . .	3		
F. Absence of friction and prevalence of spirit of coöperation among members . . . . .	5		
G. Meetings			
1. Frequency <sup>k</sup> . . . . .	2		
2. Regularity <sup>l</sup> . . . . .	2		
III. Membership and attendance			
A. Per cent of parents who are members <sup>m</sup> . . . . .	5		
B. Per cent of men members . . . .	4		
C. Per cent of teachers who are members . . . . .	4		
D. Per cent of membership in average attendance <sup>n</sup> . . . . .	5		
E. Per cent of teachers in average attendance . . . . .	4		
Total . . . . .	100	100	

\* Column 1 gives the value suggested for associations in general. In Column 2 place the value that you believe should be assigned under *your* conditions. In Column 3 record the credit you would allow for your achievements this year.

## DEFINITIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

a. This meeting should come shortly after the new officers are elected or at least several weeks before the new school year begins. It should be devoted to a consideration of policies for the coming year and to methods of carrying them into effect.

b. This means a definite survey of one or more of the educational problems of the community. Such a survey might deal with the use children make of their leisure hours, home-study conditions, recreation facilities for children in the community, health habits of children, etc. Its purpose is to show what problems exist, to what degree they are serious, and to give exact data as a basis for discussion.

The credit to be allowed this item by a local association should be determined by the estimated degree to which this survey procedure is used. Allow one-fourth credit where no definite data are secured but where careful observation is made of the educational needs by such methods as inquiring of parents and school officers what they consider the most important needs of the year. Sometimes school or community surveys furnish data that may be utilized by a parent-teacher association. (See Chapter V.)

c. Programs should be made as much in detail at this time as possible. It is to be expected that some modifications will need to be made from time to time. The entire year's program should be printed or mimeographed and put into the hands of each member.

d. The number of "projects" or activities that should be undertaken should depend upon such factors as the number of pressing needs that exist and the energy available in the association. Two extremes should be avoided: dealing with one problem so exclusively that interest lags; dealing with so many that nothing definite is accomplished.

e. This is, of course, the most important of the items. All others tend to make a high degree of success possible in this one. (See Chapters III and IV.)

The local association should distribute the points allowed this

item among the six suggested objectives. This distribution should be based upon the educational needs of the community as determined in "B 1" above. If the association finds that a desired objective has been omitted, it should be added. The distribution may, of course, differ from year to year according to what the association wishes to emphasize. In giving a score for the year the local association should allow each objective what it thinks the year's achievement justifies.

*f.* The emphasis on entertainment features should be determined by what is necessary to maintain interest in the association. The large function of the organization is to deal with the educational problems of children and young people. (See Chapter II.)

*g.* The following suggest activities that are generally too far afield from the educational problems of children and young people: studying Burns's poetry; aiding in the community-chest campaign; discussing road building, except where children's educational interests are affected. It is impossible to draw a sharp line between what is legitimate and what is not except as we study the needs of children in the community. (See pp. 70-73.)

*h.* *Interest* in the work of the board or teaching staff should not be mistaken for *interference*. In general we may say that interference results when the association makes it difficult for the board or teaching staff to carry out a policy that has been adopted. (See pp. 50-52; 73, 74.)

*i.* Includes work in unorganized territories, developing pre-school circles, and collecting funds for extension on Founders' Day.

*j.* The number of committees, both standing and special, should be dependent upon the work the association is undertaking during the year. Each "dead" (nonworking) committee should reduce proportionally the points allowed.

*k.* Frequency of meetings should, of course, be determined on the basis of the number that can be held successfully. As a tentative standard, hold one each month.

*l.* Meetings should be held on a regular day of the week and month so that everyone knows when to expect it.

*m.* A "member" is one who has paid any required regular dues for the year.

*n.* To determine this, add the number of members in attendance at each meeting and divide by the number of meetings held. Then divide this figure by the total membership of the association.

*Assigning credits.* — The values given in column 1 of the scale should be considered only as suggestive since parent-teacher problems vary in importance from community to community. This year an association that is just getting started may feel particularly the need of a large active membership. Two years hence, if the desired interest has been created, this may not be such an important problem. An association wishing to measure itself in terms of meeting *its* problems should assign a relatively large value to the items of particular concern that year, and reduce the value on problems not so acute. In this way the relative importance of objectives or of any item may vary from year to year in an association, as well as among associations at any given time.

*How to use the scale.* — 1. At the beginning of the year officers should study the scale and its accompanying standards to understand thoroughly what it contains. Time may be given to its consideration in a business session of the association.

2. Any omitted items of importance due to particular conditions facing the association should be added.



3. The values of the various items should be set down (in column 2) so that all may see definitely what the year's work should achieve.

4. Toward the close of the year a score should be given each item, recorded in column 3, and the total added. Since there are certain to be "easy graders" and "hard graders," it would be well for several people to assign credits independently. The averages of these judgments may be used as the final score or, through discussion, the scorers may arrive at a group judgment.

5. The officers, at least, should study the items scored low to see why they did not succeed better. From such a discussion may come helpful suggestions for the next year's work.

6. The new officers, meeting with the old, may then set up the new values to be assigned for the coming year.

If an association prefers, it may dispense with the scoring, and mark each item as "high," "average," or "low." It is not so much the score as the process of self-evaluation that is important.

*Some cautions to be observed.* — Some of the standards, such as the percentage of membership in average attendance (item III *D*), are entirely objective and so an accurate score may be given. Others, like "noninterference with work of board or teaching staff" (item I *F*), are not so objective, making exact scoring more difficult. In such cases it is well to review with care the work of the year and to

subtract rather heavily for any case of interference. High scoring is no more helpful in this situation than encouraging your doctor to overlook a physical weakness. If self-improvement is to follow, the truth, as nearly as it can be reached, must be faced frankly.

Care should be taken in comparing the efficiency of two or more associations by means of this scale. Scores are not comparable unless the same values are used by the different associations and unless uniform methods of scoring are employed. The greatest use of such a scale is in self-evaluation.

Finally, it should be remembered that no scale for parent-teacher work can be more than tentative until we know more about the many problems involved. If we keep an open mind and study critically educational needs that arise, we shall soon be able to speak more authoritatively.

**A trained leadership needed.** — Problems which parent-teacher associations face cannot be adequately met by the casual thought of the mediocre. As emphasized in the preceding chapters, there must be constructive leadership. While a large amount of specialized training, such as we expect of a teacher, is not necessary, some special knowledge is imperative. Those who direct parent-teacher work should understand something of our modern theory of education, know what the local school is undertaking, see clearly the legitimate objectives of associations, and know how to make those objectives effective. They should certainly be familiar with

the history, principles, and policies of the National Congress and of the state branches.

*How a trained leadership may be secured.* — In practically every community there are parents with ability for successful leadership. A few not only have the necessary native endowments but are equipped with some of the specialized knowledge required. For example, a parent who has been a teacher — if her training is relatively recent or if she has not entirely neglected her professional reading — has much of the specialized knowledge needed to understand the function of education, and the place of the school, the home, and other special environments in realizing that function. She will, however, need to give thought as to just what place the parent-teacher association has in this work and as to how its objectives may be attained.

The “short course” or institute for parent-teacher workers is one way of giving this specialized training. For example, Cornell University in May, 1927, held a “Parent-Teacher Leadership Course” for one week. During that period the following topics were presented and discussed:

1. The function of the modern elementary school (two lectures).
2. Demonstration teaching (four periods).
3. The health of the child (five lectures).
4. The preschool child (three lectures).
5. History and organization of the parent-teacher association (two lectures).
6. What associations do and what they should do (three lectures).

During the week two excursions with picnic dinners introduced sufficient entertainment features.

For several years Teachers College of Columbia University has given special summer courses for those interested in parent-teacher work. Two courses of three weeks each were offered in the 1927 summer session. The courses considered the fundamental significance of the parent-teacher movement, its place in education, how to organize associations in all parts of the country, the organization and function of state branches, how the state and national bodies aid local groups, and the development of the movement abroad. An exhibit of the many varieties of free published helps furnished by the State and National Congress, of the literature of the national coöperating organizations, and a poster and chart display were open to students in education, to superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents.

Similar courses are being introduced into normal schools, colleges, and universities. In time it is to be expected that there will be at least one center in each state offering courses for parent-teacher leaders. Anyone interested in this work will find helpful a bulletin <sup>1</sup> published by the National Congress.

The National Congress and its state branches publish many other informational bulletins on various aspects of their work and are beginning to provide

<sup>1</sup> *Outline of Courses on the Parent-Teacher Movement.* Published by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

field workers to visit and aid the various communities.

While parent-teacher leadership is rather shifting, the average length of the alert parent's participation should be considerably longer than ten years. Parents should be identified actively with an association during the twelve years their child is attending school. Long before that period has passed, those with leadership capacities should have acquired sufficient specialized knowledge to make them effective leaders.

**The test of the parent-teacher association.** — During the last five years the organization has had an astonishingly rapid growth. It has gone through its promotion period. The real test comes now, and that test is whether it will utilize scientific method in delimiting its problems and in discovering effective methods of attacking them. Unless it does this the parent-teacher movement, like any other depending largely upon an emotional stimulus, is likely to decline. Wisely directed, it has an important place in our scheme of education.



## APPENDICES





## APPENDIX A

### DETAILED DATA RELATING TO ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OF ASSOCIATIONS (CHAPTER II)

Table IX contains the detailed data resulting from an analysis of 763 local associations. Diagrams 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 9, 15, 16) were constructed from this table.

The presentation of the data makes possible comparisons among the nine states and among schools of different size. For example, Group I, "providing money," includes 44 per cent of the activities of the California associations, 35.9 per cent of the Iowa associations, 51.6 per cent of the Michigan associations, and so on. The same group includes 58.1 per cent of all activities in one- and two-teacher schools, and 56.5 per cent in schools with three to five teachers. Data for associations in places over 2500 population are from New York only. There, 41.1 per cent of the activities belong to Group I. In this table the figures in bold-face type give the percentage of all activities devoted to the large groups (I, II, etc.); those in italics give the percentages for the main subdivisions (*A*, *B*, etc.); while the more detailed activities are shown in ordinary type. At the top of the table, notice that the eighty-six associations reporting from California engaged in a total of 509 activities, the median<sup>1</sup> number of activities per association being 5.4. The sixty-two associations from Iowa reported only 226 activities, with 3.5 the median number of activities.

Note that this table shows the *frequency* with which associations reported the different activities and *not the*

<sup>1</sup> For explanation of the "median" see footnote on p. 97.

*amount of energy* given to those activities. Desirable as it would be to know the effort given to these various activities, there seemed to be no practicable way of getting reliable data on this matter at the present time. Hence buying a victrola, holding an art exhibit, or giving a picnic are, in this table, considered of equal weight.

As one studies the data, he is impressed with the large number of activities in which these associations were engaged. The fifty types<sup>1</sup> here reported are condensed from the original analysis of 109 types.

The meaning of each of these nine groups of activities has been explained in Chapter II. Further explanation is necessary in order to clear up possible difficulties in interpretation.

"Theater" (item 20) includes such matters as trying to influence the theater managers to provide better facilities or plays, chaperoning Saturday morning parties to the moving pictures, getting a particular picture for the community, and even providing for pictures being shown when none are regularly provided in the community.

Group VI, "Social activities primarily for educational purposes," differs from "Play" (item 22) in that there is involved in the former some purpose, such as recognition of the athletic team, other than mere entertainment or recreation.

"Charity" (item 45) differs from item 9 in that the

<sup>1</sup> Attention should be called to the fact that in the classification of data of this nature we cannot claim absolute uniformity. However, the personal equation was eliminated in part by the fact that all the analyses of activities and all classifications were made by one person skilled in dealing with such materials. This person was further aided in uniformity of classification by setting down type situations as they arose. For example, the distinctions regarding items 22 and 37 ("Play" and "Parties") in Table IX were made as suggested when the cases first arose and were continued throughout the analysis of the data.





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latter includes money used for a direct educational purpose, such as aiding poor children to secure proper school supplies, while the former involves such items as clothing and food baskets given for other than a strictly educational purpose.

Table X gives the details regarding the topics included in the programs analyzed and makes possible comparisons among the various states and among schools of different size. Diagrams 4, 5, and 6 (pp. 18, 19, 21) were constructed from this table.

The data in this table count each "topic" of equal weight, whether a ten-minute talk on the hot lunch or a forty-minute demonstration in the teaching of hygiene. There seemed to be no practicable method of determining the relative weight of these "topics" even in terms of time devoted to them on the program. Table X, therefore, does not answer the question, "How much energy did the associations give in their programs to the various classes of topics?" but rather, "How often do the various classes of topics appear in the programs?"

## APPENDIX B

### DETAILED DATA RELATING TO MEMBERSHIP (CHAPTER VI)

The discussion of Table XI may be found on pp. 101-102 of Chapter VI and that of Table XII on p. 102 of the same chapter.

#### TABLE XI

MEDIAN PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MEMBERS (EXCLUDING TEACHERS)  
WHO ARE NOT PARENTS. (NO MEDIAN IS GIVEN  
WHERE THERE ARE FEWER THAN TEN CASES.)

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULATION
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+	Total	
Number associations reporting . . .	120	108	183	149	560	126
California . . .	16.0	9.0	8.2	6.7	9.5	5.6
Iowa . . . . .			12.9	8.7	10.8	
Michigan . . .	13.9	7.4	9.6	6.8	9.2	
New Jersey . .	14.9	13.2	10.3	6.0	12.2	
New York . . .	16.0	9.3	6.5	13.2	14.4	
North Carolina .			7.9	16.0	11.6	
Ohio . . . . .			13.1	13.9	14.5	
Texas . . . . .			9.8	8.5	9.6	
Virginia . . . .					21.0	
All 9 States . .	16.3	10.5	12.0	9.5	11.7	

TABLE XII

MEDIAN PERCENTAGE OF HOMES HAVING AT LEAST ONE MEMBER  
IN PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION. (NO MEDIAN IS GIVEN  
WHERE THERE ARE FEWER THAN TEN CASES)

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+	Total	
Number of associa- tions reporting	111	93	147	110	461	103
California . . .	66.0	55.0	45.0	33.3	55.0	30.3
Iowa . . . . .			50.0	38.8	53.3	
Michigan . . .	81.3	48.3		26.7	58.8	
New Jersey . .	84.0	51.3	40.0	27.5	51.0	
New York . . .	100.0	63.3	47.1	29.2	53.1	
North Carolina .			60.0		41.7	
Ohio . . . . .			42.5	40.0	43.0	
Texas . . . . .			25.0		28.6	
Virginia . . . .					33.8	
All 9 States . .	83.8	53.7	42.8	32.2	49.7	

For a discussion of reasons for members dropping out and of methods found helpful in arousing and retaining the interest of parents, see Chapter VI, pages 108-110. The detailed data on these matters are given in Tables XIII and XIV.

TABLE XIII

REASONS WHY MEMBERS DROP OUT AS REPORTED BY LOCAL  
ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION (New York only)
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+	Total	
Number of associ- ations reporting	106	97	163	128	494	130
<i>Reasons given</i>						
"No trouble along this line" . . .	26.4%	29.9%	30.1%	34.4%	30.4%	21.5%
"Moving away"	38.7	38.1	22.7	18.0	27.9	26.9
"Lack of interest"	14.2	17.5	21.5	21.9	19.2	10.8
"Lack of time, etc." . . .	6.6	10.3	12.9	15.6	11.8	9.2
"Children gradu- ated" . . .	9.4	9.3	10.4	10.1	9.9	42.3
"Personal quar- rels, jealousy, etc." . . .	9.4	7.2	6.1	4.7	6.7	3.1
"Other interests"	3.8	3.1	6.7	9.4	6.1	4.6
"Want entertain- ment, etc." .	0.0	1.0	5.5	3.9	3.0	0.8
"No value in pro- gram" . . .	0.9	0.0	4.9	2.3	2.4	2.3
"Feel neglected"	0.9	2.1	1.2	0.8	1.2	4.6

<sup>1</sup> This figure is the percentage of all associations reporting this answer. Some associations gave only one answer but most gave several; hence the total of per cents is not 100.



TABLE XIV

METHODS FOUND HELPFUL IN AROUSING AND RETAINING THE INTEREST OF PARENTS. THE FIGURE GIVEN IS THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL ASSOCIATIONS REPORTING THAT HAVE SUGGESTED EACH METHOD

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION (New York only)
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11 +	Total	
Number of associations . . .	104	94	165	134	497	122
<i>Methods</i>						
"Get togethers" with refresh- ments . . .	35.6%	28.7%	25.5%	27.6%	28.8%	14.8%
Programs by chil- dren . . .	22.1	31.9	30.3	29.1	28.6	38.5
Entertainment (plays, dancing, "sings," etc.)	26.9	27.7	24.8	14.9	23.1	22.1
Attendance con- test . . .	4.8	17.0	16.4	26.1	16.7	18.9
Outside speakers	14.4	21.3	14.5	13.4	15.5	13.9
Announcements (posters, adver- tising, newspa- per accounts, etc.) . . .	5.8	6.4	13.3	11.2	9.9	13.9
Distributing re- sponsibilities among members	9.6	3.2	8.5	9.7	8.0	13.1
Special meetings (father's nights, meetings at homes, etc.) .	1.9	12.8	9.7	7.5	8.0	10.7

TABLE XIV (Continued)

METHODS FOUND HELPFUL IN AROUSING AND RETAINING THE INTEREST OF PARENTS. THE FIGURE IS THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL ASSOCIATIONS REPORTING THAT HAVE SUGGESTED EACH METHOD

NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LESS THAN 2500 POPULATION					2500 OR MORE POPULA- TION (New York only)
	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+	Total	
<i>Methods</i>						
Programs based upon definitely stated objectives . . .	5.8	3.2	7.3	5.2	5.6	6.6
Personal invitations . . .	2.9	5.3	5.5	6.0	5.0	8.2
Discussions (open forum, question box, etc.) . .	1.0	3.2	6.7	6.0	4.6	2.5
Emphasizing particular community needs	1.9	1.1	3.6	7.5	3.8	12.3
Making meetings "snappy" . .	1.0	2.1	2.4	3.7	2.4	1.6
Coöperating with other organizations . . .	1.9	1.1	1.2	3.0	1.8	1.6
Personal work (calling on sick, greeting cards at Christmas, etc.) . . .	2.9	1.1	1.8	1.5	1.8	12.3
Stressing democracy in organization . . .	1.0	2.1	0.6	2.2	1.4	4.1

## APPENDIX C

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